

**RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND KAZAKHSTAN  
IN THE POST-SOVIET ERA (1992 - 1997)**

by

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**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
of the Australian National University**

**March 1998**

## Declaration

I hereby declare that this is my work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief , it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgment is made in the text of the thesis. I hereby also certify that the work contained in the thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Mikhail Alexandrov



Date: 25.03.98



## Acknowledgments

Professor Amin Saikal, Director of the Centre for Middle Eastern and Central Asian Studies (CMECAS) of the Australian National University, was the supervisor of this doctoral thesis. It will not be an exaggeration to say that without his assistance the successful completion of the thesis would have been impossible. I am particularly grateful to him for allocating funds for my field trip to Russia and Kazakhstan, which allowed me to collect essential new source materials unavailable elsewhere.

I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Mr Geoffrey Jukes, whose guidance and counsel played an essential part in writing and editing the thesis. Mr Jukes showed unprecedented commitment to giving detailed and elaborate advice to his Ph D students, myself included, despite the fact that this workload put substantial strains on him and his personal time.

I would like to note the role of Mr John Miller from the Department of Political Science at La Trobe University, who contributed by means of advice and comments to the success of my work.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to Doctor of Political Science from Kazakhstan Reykhan Kalieva, who gave me essential assistance during my visit to Almaty.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the role played in the preparation of the thesis by my wife Elena. Not only did she give me moral support which was in itself most important for the progress of my work, but made a direct contribution to its earlier completion by designing the wonderful maps and assisting me to compile the Bibliography for the thesis.

## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the relations between Russia and Kazakhstan as they emerged and developed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The study concentrates on the period between 1992 and 1997. However, the first chapter is of a background nature. It embraces the period between 1985 and 1991, and shows how the process of disintegration was building up in relations between Moscow and Kazakhstan, as well as the roles played in this process by the Kazakh and Russian national elites.

Subsequently the thesis examines the following groups of issues: policy of national state building in Kazakhstan and its effects on the Russian population of the republic and on relations between Moscow and Almaty; Kazakh and Russian attitudes to post-Soviet economic and political integration, either within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) or on some other basis such as a Eurasian Union or within the Customs Union, including Russia, Belorussia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan; Kazakhstan's nuclear disarmament, the problem of Baykonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan's participation in the CIS collective security system and Russian-Kazakh bilateral relations in the military sphere; Russian energy policy towards Kazakhstan, the problem of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), Tengiz and Karachaganak oil and gas projects and the legal status of the Caspian Sea.



## **Note on Transliteration**

In writing the thesis the author relied on both Russian and English language sources. All Russian language sources in the footnotes are given in transliterated form. When necessary the author used transliteration of Russian names and terms in the text.

Transliteration of Russian words follows the standard system of the British Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (PCGN) at the exception of cases when a particular name has already acquired an established transliteration in English (for example, *Trotsky*).

The author tried to achieve maximum possible degree of translation of specific Russian (Soviet) terminology into English, avoiding where possible russification of the text. However, when practical, Russian terms well known and frequently used in English (e.g. *perestroyka*) were retained in their original transliterated form without translation.

To make understanding of the Russian sources easier to a reader unacquainted with Russian language, the author made full translation of all such sources into English in Bibliography. Besides, the Introduction to the thesis contains a short overview of the main sources and literature used in the thesis.

Since Kazakh and other Turkic names and terms were taken from Russian language sources their transliteration is given on the basis of their Russian language transcription.

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## INTRODUCTION

The collapse of the Soviet Union created a new geopolitical reality on the vast spaces of Eurasia. Instead of one superpower, fifteen new independent states emerged, each with its own national identity. Kazakhstan was the second largest republic of the former USSR, and consequently the second largest new independent state to appear in the wake of the USSR's collapse. The importance from both economic and geostrategic perspectives of this new player on the international scene can hardly be exaggerated. Possessing huge mineral resources, including large deposits of oil and gas, Kazakhstan has already become the focal point of a diplomatic struggle between world powers including the United States, Russia, the European Union and China, and important regional countries such as Iran and Turkey.

The subject of Kazakhstan's relations with Russia, the former imperial power which controlled various regions of Kazakhstan for more than two centuries, is of interest from both academic and practical policy perspectives. Undoubtedly Russian-Kazakh relations will be of exceptional importance for Kazakhstan's development as a new independent state, and for the general geostrategic situation in Eurasia in the 21st century. In other words maintenance of the existing geopolitical equilibrium on the Eurasian mainland will to a large degree depend on the direction taken by Russian-Kazakh relations, and whether Kazakhstan survives as an independent state.

Post-Soviet Western and Russian books on post-independence Central Asia have tended to concentrate on issues such as Russian policy to Central Asia or the CIS as a whole, or the political and economic development of the Central Asian States, and to touch on specific issues such as Russian-Kazakh relations only in passing. Research on that issue is rare, and consists mainly of articles, reports and essays published in journals or collective works. Some of these publications are of substantial academic value, but they usually address individual issues of Russian-Kazakh relations, cover short time frames, and do not attempt to depict or draw conclusions about the relationship as a whole.

So far no book entirely devoted to post-independence Russian-Kazakh relations has appeared, except for one by T.Mansurov Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Moscow.<sup>1</sup> But it is primarily an academic representation of Kazakhstan's official position, and is valuable mainly for its collection of factual material on Russian-Kazakh relations which can be of use to other scholars.

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<sup>1</sup> Mansurov T., *Kazakhstan - Rossiya: suverenizatsiya, integratsiya, opit strategicheskogo partnerstva (1991 - 1995)*, Moscow, 1996.



## The conceptual basis

The central operational concept in this thesis is ethnicity and nationalism. Without undertaking a theoretical examination of the nature of ethnic nationalism, the author perceives it as a major motivating and mobilising force which has driven and continues to drive domestic and international politics. Attempts by the Soviet Communists to subdue this force and subordinate it to "higher order" values represented by the ideology of proletarian internationalism experienced a most dramatic failure. This failure not only proved the inadequacy of Marxist theory, but had very direct consequences for the fate of the USSR.

The reasons for the USSR's disintegration were manifold, some of them the product of subjective factors and specific policies applied by the last Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev. However, the major reason, the driving force of the disintegration process, was ethnic nationalism, the rise of which in the former USSR was predetermined by the very essence of Bolshevik nationality policy, which divided the former Russian empire into ethnic-territorial units. The various territories were assigned the status of national republics, provinces and districts, named after a certain nationality which had a majority or plurality in them. Subsequently representatives of this "titular" nationality were given preferential treatment in appointments in various spheres of the local administration, and this led to the emergence of solid networks, based on kinship, connections and mutual gain. This initiated a process of formation of powerful national elites. Instead of eliminating ethnic divisions in the multinational state, the Bolsheviks laid the grounds for their exacerbation.

In the 1920s and 30s ethnic nationalism did not gain ground, because national elites in the republics and other territories of the USSR were still relatively weak. The previous leaders had disappeared in the battles of the Civil War, and the new ones put in charge by the Soviets lacked their own power base and derived most of their authority from Moscow. In that situation it was easy for Stalin to introduce a highly centralised, pyramidal administrative system, where the local state or Party official's role was nothing more than implementation of Moscow's directives. When Stalin noticed even the slightest symptoms of dissent among ethnic leaders, he ruthlessly destroyed them in a purge of "bourgeois nationalists". In all, Stalin's policy effectively prevented new national elites developing into coherent political entities.

The Second World War led to a dramatic shift in public perceptions on proletarian internationalism. Firstly, Germany's attack on the USSR dealt an irrevocable blow to the whole concept of internationalism. Secondly, in the prewar and wartime periods a new, younger generation of politicians, government officials and business executives came into being. This new generation, brought up under the existing system of ethnic-territorial divisions, had loyalties divided between their own republic and the USSR as a whole.

Stalin's death brought a certain relaxation of totalitarian control over the society, and Khrushchev made very significant concessions to national elites. Many national communist leaders and some ethnic groups which had been oppressed under Stalin were rehabilitated. This period saw the consolidation of national elites, and their formation into coherent political entities. When Brezhnev came to power in October 1964 he had to acknowledge the existence of this new factor in the Soviet political system. To return to Stalin's policies would have meant a new wave of repression, an option which promised no bright future for the Soviet political elite, nor for himself personally.

It must be acknowledged that Brezhnev managed to find a response to the challenge. It was under him that a very elaborate and subtle system of managing nationality relations in the USSR came into being. Apparently sceptical about the "unifying force" of Marxist-Leninist ideology, Brezhnev found a way out in reanimating traditional practices of the earlier Russian empire. These were unattractive but reliable and time-tested methods of administering the vast spaces of the Eurasian mainland, and entailed a political compromise between national elites and Moscow. The elites received a free hand in running domestic affairs in their respective regions, and could enjoy all sorts of privileges and benefits, provided they did not violate the law, were not conspicuously overindulgent, and did not provoke public discontent. In fact maintenance of order and stability in their localities was now their own responsibility. All external relations, defence and security issues, naturally, remained in Moscow's hands, and regional elites had to ensure their region's appropriate input to the common all-Union economic complex. Provided they kept their part of the bargain, Moscow did not interfere. If they failed, a regional scapegoat was found and dismissed, and someone new appointed, usually from the same elite. Whatever its pluses and minuses, the system created by Brezhnev enabled the ethnically complex USSR to develop in a modest but sustainable way, in conditions of relative stability. This was the situation when in March 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev took up the office of General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU).

## Sources and literature

The author began this study by examining the history of pre-Soviet Russian-Kazakh relations, since most of the problems that characterise their current relations are rooted in the historical past, some of them as early as the late 18th century. Fortunately a substantial number of works on the topic have been published both in the West, former USSR and Kazakhstan.

The most authoritative Western work on the history of Kazakhstan is M. Olcott's "The Kazakhs".<sup>2</sup> The author used it extensively as reference material and a source of ideas. Among other Western academics who wrote on various

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<sup>2</sup> All sources mentioned in this overview are listed in the Bibliography.

aspects of Kazakhstan's history the author would like to mention G.A.Vernadsky, G.J.Demko, L.Krader, G.Jukes and R.Davis. The author also made extensive study of the Soviet literature. Of most utility for preparation of the thesis were the five-volume "History of Kazakhstan from Ancient Times to Our Days", produced by the Kazakhstan Academy of Sciences<sup>3</sup> and works by S.E.Tolybekov, J.K.Kasimbayev, R.S.Suleimanov and V.I.Moiseev, N.A.Khalfin, N.E.Bekmakhanova, Kh.Tursunov, S.Zimanov, N.Kiykbayev. Unfortunately, after the collapse of the USSR research in Russia on Kazakhstan's history virtually ceased and no new books were published. This, however, was compensated by a plethora of new publications in independent Kazakhstan. They include a new one-volume version of the "History of Kazakhstan from Ancient Times to Our Days"<sup>4</sup>, and books by A.Abdakimov, A.Feoktistov, S.Maduanov, K.A.Jirenchin, S.Maduanov, D.A.Amanzholova and R.Masov.

The combination of books by different authors from different countries, and published at different times, enabled a fairly balanced picture of the history of Russian-Kazakh relations to be formed. There are, of course, still a number of "black spots" in the Soviet history of Kazakhstan, requiring further examination on the basis of new material which became available only after the collapse of the Soviet Union. These include: the history of the Alash Orda movement<sup>5</sup>, especially its post-civil war cooperation with the Bolsheviks; the Kazakhs' position on the Soviet delimitation of Central Asia, and the results of this delimitation for Kazakhstan; the famine in Kazakhstan during the collectivisation of Soviet agriculture, with particular emphasis on the role of Moscow and Kazakhstan's local authorities; repressions against "bourgeois nationalists" in Kazakhstan; migration to Kazakhstan in Soviet.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Istoriya Kazakhskoy SSR s drevneyshikh vremen do nashikh dnei, Vol.1-5 / Ed. Akademiya Nauk Kazakhskoy SSR, Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1977-1981.

<sup>4</sup> Istoriya Kazakhstana s drevneyshikh vremen do nashikh dnei / Ed. Natsional'naya Akademiya Nauk Respubliki Kazakhstan, Almaty: Deuir, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> Alash Orda - Kazakh nationalist movement established in December 1905 in the time of the first Russian revolution. It had close links with Russian Constitutional Democratic Party and shared its political platform. The movement had elected deputies in the first Russian parliament (State Duma). After the overthrow of the Russian Tsar in February 1917 the movement supported the Provisional Government and opposed Bolshevik takeover in October 1917. In the Civil War Alash Orda supported anti-Bolshevik forces, but in the end switched sides and joined the Soviet Government. The core of the movement's political program was autonomy for Kazakhs within Russian federation. In late 1920's - early 1930's most of the Alash Orda leaders perished in purgers directed against "bourgeois nationalists".

<sup>6</sup> The author made a modest contribution to the research of the latter issue. See: Alexandrov, M., Russian Migration to Kazakhstan // Russian and Euro-Asian Economic Bulletin, Vol.5, No.6, 1996, Melbourne: University of Melbourne, 1996, pp. 1-12.

In writing about contemporary Russian-Kazakh relations the following types of sources have been used. First and most important were documents and other official materials. A very valuable source was a collection of Russian-Kazakh treaties and agreements published by Kazakhstan's Embassy in Moscow. Another valuable source was a set of documents prepared for the April 1995 hearings on Russo-Kazakh relations of the Russian State Duma Committee on CIS Affairs and Ties with Compatriots. Besides several significant agreements between Russia and Kazakhstan not included in the Kazakhstan Embassy publication, the collection contained official reports by Russian government agencies on the status of relations with Kazakhstan in their respective fields, documents prepared by Russian community organisations in Kazakhstan, and several analytical reports prepared by the Duma's own experts. Of primary importance to the thesis were the minutes of the hearings themselves. They included testimony by high-ranking Russian officials from various government departments. The opinions voiced by them helped to form an impression on the Russian government's real attitude to relations with Kazakhstan. The hearings were also attended by Kazakhstan's Ambassador Mansurov, and representatives of Russian community organisations in Kazakhstan and of several Russian research institutions.

The author also made use of documents published in various Russian and Kazakhstan official bulletins and periodicals, such as the *Diplomaticheskij vestnik* of the Russian and *Diplomaticheskij kurier* of the Kazakhstan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the *Bulleten' Mezhdunarodnykh Dogovorov* of the Russian Presidential Administration and *Informatsionnyy Bulletin'* of the CIS Parliamentary Assembly, as well as documents published from time to time in Russian and Kazakhstan official newspapers such as *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, *Rossiyskie vesti* and *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*. A valuable source for research into the Gorbachev period was a collection of documents on the nationalities question in the USSR, prepared by Ch.F.Furtado and A.Chandler. Official materials such as publications, statements and interviews by Presidents Yeltsin and Nazarbayev, the Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers of the two countries, or other ministers and high-

ranking officials were also used, as were impersonal official materials such as statements, resolutions and publications by various government agencies.

With regard to actual facts and developments in Russian-Kazakh relations the author extensively used the second type of sources - reports by information agencies, especially Reuters, ITAR-TASS, Radio Liberty, USIA and publications in the Russian, Kazakhstan and sometimes Western periodical press. The author would like to particularly single out the BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, which contained very valuable material on events in Kazakhstan. Also of great utility was the monthly bulletin of the Russian Institute for Scientific Information on Social Sciences "Russia and the Muslim World", which publishes summaries of almost all articles pertaining to post-Soviet Central Asia appearing in the Russian press.

The third group of sources comprised memoirs, books, brochures and academic journal articles related to the subject of the research. The memoirs gave an insight into some events that took place behind the scenes. The author drew extensively on the memoirs of Kunayev, Nazarbayev and Gorbachev, and to a lesser extent on those of Boldin, Pavlov and Ligachev. To the same category of literature the author relegates a biographical publication on Nazarbayev, by D.Valovoy and an essay by a Russian journalist, N.Kuzmin, giving his impressions of life in Kazakhstan before the collapse of the USSR.<sup>8</sup> As memoirs are usually very subjective sources, the reminiscences of each memoirist were checked against those of others wherever possible.

Among works by Western scholars, particular attentions was paid to those addressing issues of nationalism, the role of political elites and political processes in Central Asia within the chronological limits of the thesis, Russian policies towards Central Asia and the CIS as a whole, and the foreign policies of the new independent states of Central Asia. Of special interest to the author were several recent publications on Central Asia by M.B.Olcott. Other scholars, whose works were useful for the purposes of the research include J.Lepingwell, R.Dannreuther, A.Dixon, C.D.Harris, C.Undeland, N.Platt, S.Adshead, B.Fowkes, R.D.McChesney, M.Rywwin, T.H.Rigby, G.Parry and C.W.Mills.

In Russia the one and only major publication on post-Soviet Kazakhstan was produced by the Russian Institute of Strategic Studies (RISI).<sup>9</sup> It was a collective work, covering topics such as Kazakhstan's economic situation (G.D.Bessarabov), stages of economic development (Yu.I.Puzanov), prospects for economic union with Russia (E.M.Ivanov), oil and gas industry (A.N.Loginov), military issues (G.G.Tishchenko, A.G.Onopko, A.A.Makunin, A.T.Volkov), political parties (A.A.Kurtov), the ethnic and political situation (M.N.Guboglo), and some other problems. It contained many interesting facts and some valuable assessments. The institute, though not formally affiliated with any government agency, is closely linked to the Russian defence and security establishment.

<sup>8</sup> Kuzmin, N., *Nochnyye besedy* (Nocturnal conversations) // *Molodaya Gvardiya*, No.2, 1997, pp. 249-350.

<sup>9</sup> *Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya* / Pod obschey redaktsiey E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: Rossiyskiy institut strategicheskikh issledovaniy, 1995.



Issues of Russia's relations with Central Asian states, including Kazakhstan, found reflection in publications (brochures and articles) by M.Khroustalev, A.Zagorsky, D.Trofimov and S.Solodovnik produced by the Centre for International Studies at Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO). Since MGIMO is a subdivision of the Russian Foreign Ministry, it is not surprising that their views reflect the attitudes prevalent among Russian diplomats. Another Moscow academic who specialises in Kazakhstan is Professor Bagramov, chief editor of the journal "Eurasia", subsidised by Kazakhstan's government. In all, the number of Russian academic publications both on Russian-Kazakh relations, and on Kazakhstan as such is insignificant. Serious research and production of quality academic material is hampered by the unavailability of funds and the government's refusal to increase budget allocations for scholarship.

Far more publications on Russian-Kazakh relations are produced in Kazakhstan. There are two main think-tanks producing literature on the issues of foreign policy, defence and security: The Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies (KISI), and the Institute for Development of Kazakhstan (IRK). Both are closely linked to the government. KISI is a subdivision of the presidential administration, and IRK was founded by the cabinet of ministers. Each has its own periodical publications. KISI issues a journal *Kazakhstan i mirovye otnosheniya* and IRK two journals *Politika (Sayasat)* and *Evraziyskoye soobshchestvo: ekonomika, politika, bezopasnost'*. Both institutions regularly publish separate brochures and reports.

The major expert on Russian-Kazakh relations is KISI's Director, U.T.Kasenov, who has published far more on the subject than any other Kazakh scholar. Other KISI researchers who contributed to the study of the subject are B.B.Abdigaliev, A.K.Sultangaliev, M.Laumulin, Sh.E.Zhaksibekova, M.Zaslavskaya. Among works by IRK's academics are those by its President E.M.Arinov, Director R.K.Zhulamanov and researcher M.U.Spanov, and by outside experts who actively participated in IRK's publications, such as L.Bakaev, Head of a Branch in the Division of International Security of the Kazakhstan Foreign Ministry, or B.T.Ayaganov, A.U.Kuvandikov, and S.Z.Baimagambetov, senior Kazakhstan government officials. Valuable information was contained in a publication by M.Arenov and S.Kalmikov. Naturally, the views and concepts expressed by all the above authors conform to the official ideology of Nazarbayev's regime. But they also have the advantage of expressing the government's position more bluntly, without excessive regard for inter-governmental civilities. In other words, Kasenov can say publicly what Nazarbayev cannot. And this gives a clear hint of the lines along which Kazakhstan's president and government are thinking.

More independent in expressing their views are academics of the Kazakhstan National University, for example, Doctor of Political Science R.M.Kaliyeva. The university also harbours individual scholars steadfastly opposed to Nazarbayev's regime, such as professors N.E.Masanov and N.Amerkulov. But

such academics are rare; Masanov, for example, has had difficulties in publishing his works in Kazakhstan, and has to approach Russian and Western publishers.

### **The scope and limits of research**

The thesis deals primarily with Russian-Kazakh relations after the collapse of the USSR, and covers the period 1992-1997. However, the first chapter is of a background nature. It examines the period 1985-1991, the last years of the USSR, known as Gorbachev's perestroika. The reason for this is that the Gorbachev period saw the initiation of certain processes in Russian-Kazakh relations which developed to a new stage after independence, and will influence the nature of the relationship for many years to come. The author considered it important to show how the process of disintegration built up in relations between Moscow and Kazakhstan, as well as the roles played in this process by members of the Kazakh and Russian national elites.

The remaining four chapters deal with the post-Soviet period. They pursue the following goals. The first goal was descriptive - to tell the reader what actually happened in Russian-Kazakh relations in 1992-1997. The second was selection - to identify the most important problems (or groups of problems) in Russian-Kazakh relations, giving priority to those issues which contained essential, long-term components of these relations, and exercised a decisive influence on each state's attitude to the other. The author identified four such groups of problems, which predetermined the structure of the thesis, each giving its name to a chapter:

The first group of problems (Chapter Two) concerns the status of the Russian community in Kazakhstan. It examines such issues as the Kazakh leadership's policy of nation-state building and its effects on Kazakhstan's Russian population and on relations between the two countries. This set of problems was put first because the author considers it the most important issue in Russian-Kazakh relations, determining in each country the attitude to each other not only of the government but of the people. In analysing this problem the term "Russian" is used in an extended fashion, to include not only ethnic Russians, but people who associate themselves with the Russian cultural heritage. An accepted term in Russia for this group is "Russian-speaking", but the term is not entirely accurate, because many Kazakhs, especially in the political elite, are Russian-speakers. Generally, this group includes other Slavs - Ukrainians and Belorussians - as well as some ethnic Germans.

The second group (Chapter Three) of problems comprises such issues as Kazakh and Russian attitudes to post-Soviet economic and political integration between the two countries, either within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), or on some other basis such as the Eurasian Union (EAU) proposed by Nazarbayev, or in the framework of the Customs Union of Russia, Belorussia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Moscow's and Almaty's attitudes towards post-Soviet integration are important for two reasons. Firstly, they are a significant

indicator of the extent of cooperation between the two countries - to what degree they trust each other. Secondly, these countries as two major players among the post-Soviet states will have a decisive role in determining the future geopolitical architecture of the Eurasian mainland: will it develop along an integrative path leading to the formation of a new supranational entity, or will it move towards greater separation and consolidation of national states?

Chapter Four deals with a set of military and strategic issues in Russian-Kazakh relations. In the past Russia had substantial military and strategic interests in Kazakhstan, and these did not disappear with the USSR's collapse. Moreover, it may be said that they became even more acute. Kazakhstan became the country with the longest common border with Russia, and at the same time a buffer state between Russia and the turbulent Muslim world. Some military and other defence-related installations in Kazakhstan are still of importance to Russia's defence capabilities. Hence Russia's long-standing interest in keeping Kazakhstan in the zone of its military and strategic influence. The issues examined in the chapter are Kazakhstan's nuclear disarmament, the problem of the Baykonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan's participation in the CIS collective security system, and bilateral relations in the military sphere.

Chapter Five addresses a group of issues related to Kazakhstan's energy resources. After independence, Kazakhstan a country with large deposits of oil and gas, attracted the attention of major international oil companies. This originated a vigorous diplomatic struggle for access and control of Kazakhstan's energy resources. Russia has a very important stake in the game - the ability to keep Kazakhstan and the whole of the Caspian basin in the sphere of its economic and political influence. The outcome of this struggle will to a large degree determine Russia's future role on the Eurasian mainland. The chapter examines such questions as Russian energy policy towards Kazakhstan, the problem of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), Tengiz and Karachaganak projects and the legal status of the Caspian Sea.

The author saw his third task as analysis of these issues. This task consisted in identifying major contradictory and concurrent interests within each group of problems, and how they extrapolate to real policies versus the declaratory policies proclaimed by the leaders of both countries. This was not always easy, because the foreign policies of both Kazakhstan and Russia (due to the background of the present Russian and Kazakh leaders) are strongly influenced by the old Soviet practice applied in relations with the countries of the former "socialist community", namely keeping quiet about differences and giving the public a sanitised version of events. To what extent these tasks have been fulfilled is for the reader to judge.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE EMERGENCE OF INDEPENDENT KAZAKHSTAN.

Gorbachev's reforms had a most significant impact on Russian-Kazakh relations in the post-Soviet era, and not simply because independent Kazakhstan emerged only as a result of USSR's collapse. Gorbachev's policy towards Kazakhstan and especially its consequences have very directly influenced the current attitudes of Russians and Kazakhs to each other. When Gorbachev took office in March 1985 he, as he himself admits, had no clear vision of future reforms, only a general idea that the Soviet system should be made more viable and effective.<sup>1</sup> He approached this problem in typical Soviet style by applying traditional administrative mechanisms. Hence the concept of "acceleration", accompanied by such measures as an anti-alcohol campaign and struggles against corruption and protectionism in public service. These measures all entailed more centralisation and control, and had nothing to do with democratising political or economic life.

At the centre of Gorbachev's effort was a personnel policy directed at cardinal renovation of the state and party apparatus. At the Politburo meeting on 1 December 1985 he said that the main reason for "stagnation" was "ossification of leading personnel", and "If we want to improve the situation we should change personnel, personnel policy". On another occasion, referring to personnel policy, he noted that moving ahead was impossible without a "small revolution in the party". He advocated tough personnel measures, because he was convinced that his policies were being "directly sabotaged". There was, however, another important reason for Gorbachev's personnel policy. As he mentioned in his memoirs, he feared removal from office, and strove to consolidate his personal power base by removing Brezhnev's associates, who could oust him as they had ousted Khrushchev.<sup>2</sup>

Overall, Gorbachev's personnel policy boiled down to a large-scale purge of the state and party apparatus, very reminiscent of all his predecessors. During his first year in power Gorbachev ousted three influential Politburo members - G. Romanov (July 1985), Prime Minister Tikhonov (September) and Moscow Party chief V. Grishin (December). Moreover 45% of USSR government ministers and 30% of the powerful regional Party First Secretaries were replaced. By March 1986 some 42.7% of voting members of the CPSU Central Committee were new.<sup>3</sup> To legitimise the purge politically, Gorbachev put forward two slogans popular with the public - struggle against economic mismanagement, and corruption.

<sup>1</sup> Gorbachev, M., *Zhizn' i reformy*, Kniga 1, Moscow: "Novosti", 1995, p. 293.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 297-298, 305, 307.

<sup>3</sup> Kaiser, R., *Why Gorbachev Happened: His Triumph and His Failure*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991, p. 115.

A massive anti-corruption campaign began in early summer 1985, after A.Yakovlev became Head of the CPSU Central Committee for Propaganda. Central Asian republics figured very highly in the campaign, probably because they were considered soft targets. Gorbachev had solid reasons to expect Central Asian leaders' morale to be low, following Andropov's large-scale crackdown on corruption in Uzbekistan in 1983. His calculations soon proved mostly justified. By the end of 1985 he had smoothly removed the leaders of three Central Asian republics - Kyrgyzia (T.Usubaliev), Turkmenistan (M.Gapurov) and Tajikistan (R.Nabiev). Uzbek Communist Party First Secretary I. Usmankhodzhaev survived simply because his appointment was very recent, after the corruption case in Uzbekistan had already ended.

The charges against Usubaliev, Gapurov and Nabiev were almost identical. An impression of them can be gleaned from the report by A.Masaliev, the new leader of Kyrgyzia, to the 18th Congress of the Kyrgyz Communist Party in January 1986. Masaliev said: "...Leninist principles of personnel policy were seriously violated. Many officials were chosen on grounds of personal loyalty, kinship or common origin". Usubaliev, he claimed, "essentially decided personnel and other matters by himself, did not permit objections, tolerated no opinion that did not agree with his own, and did not hesitate to persecute those who were recalcitrant... to justify his mistaken decisions he forced officials to be insincere or even fiddle with facts..., criticism and self-criticism were lacking while servility, sycophancy and flattery spread..., there were groundless promotions and receipt of academic titles, degrees and awards".<sup>4</sup>

The report reflected Moscow's position and thus revealed Gorbachev's views on what should be done in Central Asia. The impression is that Gorbachev failed to comprehend the importance of clan politics in Central Asian societies. What Masaliev singled out as unacceptable behaviour was in fact a centuries-old characteristic of the life of Central Asian peoples. To attack it was to attack their traditions, values and culture. Thus Gorbachev's personnel policy had one significant fault, which proved fateful. It was based on the concept of uniformity, took no account of the complexity and diversity of the former Soviet society, and also ignored a basic fact of the Soviet system, that personnel policy in ethnic republics was always an unalienable part of nationality policy, and should be subordinate to it. However, it soon became clear that Gorbachev's leadership altogether lacked a coherent nationality policy.

Though Gorbachev denies this in his memoirs,<sup>5</sup> his experience in nationality affairs was very limited, and much less that that of Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev. Gorbachev came from Stavropol region, a territory of Russia proper, where inter-ethnic relations were not a real problem. The region was not ethnically homogeneous, having, besides a Russian majority, a small autonomous province inhabited by two minor nationalities - Karachai and Cherkess. But the status of

<sup>4</sup> Brown, B., Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of Kirgizia: An Attack on the Past, Radio Liberty Research Bulletin RL 88/86, February 20, 1986, pp. 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> Gorbachev, M., *Zhizn' i reformy*, Kniga 1, Moscow: "Novosti", 1995, p. 492.

autonomous provinces was very low, in no way comparable to a Union Republic with its own government, state symbols and other attributes of statehood. Autonomous provinces were subordinate to regional administrations, and their elites intermingled with that of the region. Throughout his career in Stavropol Gorbachev apparently never experienced any particular problems with the Karachai or Cherkess.

Gorbachev did not accept, or more precisely did not understand, the essence of Brezhnev's nationalities policy, which was based on a social concord with republics' national elites. He wrote in his memoirs: "Brezhnev could not be unaware of abuses, which were taking place in Uzbekistan, malfeasances in other republics and Russian provinces, but he preferred not to raise Cain and not to foul his own nest. He went no farther than talking privately like a Dutch uncle to a miscreant leader, and in the last resort sending him somewhere as an ambassador".<sup>6</sup> This shows that Gorbachev considered Brezhnev's behaviour not as a well-conceived policy (sometimes described as "stability of cadres"), but as a major deviation from the basic principles of Communist doctrine which he, Gorbachev, was destined to correct.

Gorbachev's approach to nationalities policy was rooted in his close association with Marxist theory. As distinct from Stalin and Brezhnev, who applied Marxism in a politically expedient way to suit their domestic and foreign policy objectives, Gorbachev's adherence to Marxism was genuine. In this he stood much closer to such leaders as Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin and later Khrushchev. Not surprisingly, Gorbachev's 'purification' campaign was accompanied by vocal claims of the necessity to revive the true spirit of Marxism-Leninism. As witnessed by Gorbachev's Chief of Staff Boldin, in 1986 and 1987 Gorbachev "was strongly under the influence of Lenin's writings... It was my impression that he was anxious to propose some concept that might continue Lenin's thinking, and perhaps shake the world as powerfully as anything the Soviet Union's founding father had done".<sup>7</sup>

But Marxist theory of nationalities relations contained very little of relevance. It was based on the illusory postulate that class is a more powerful factor than nation, and deduced from this an erroneous doctrine of proletarian internationalism. Neither Stalin nor Brezhnev took it seriously, but for propaganda purposes both stopped short of denouncing it. Gorbachev had a different vision. He surrounded himself with people immersed in dogmas of Marxist theory, and this was the second factor that caused his nationality policy to fail. The leading figure among them was Alexander Yakovlev, long known for his fierce opposition to nationalism, particularly Russian nationalism.<sup>8</sup> Views close to Yakovlev's were

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 283.

<sup>7</sup> Boldin, V., *Ten Years That Shook the World*, New York: Basic Books, 1994, p. 96.

<sup>8</sup> In November 1972, while heading the CPSU Central Committee Propaganda Department, Yakovlev wrote a long article in *Literaturnaya gazeta* attacking as anti-Leninist Russophile tendencies in literature, journalism and historical writings. He also criticised the "extra-class and extra-social approach" of the nationalists to history, and censured any dabbling with religion, such as excessive admiration for old icons and churches. Yakovlev's article caused much controversy among the Soviet leadership, and a few months after its appearance he disappeared into honourable exile as Soviet Ambassador to Canada. [Sheehy, A., *Gorbachev's New Propaganda Chief a Critic of Russian Nationalists*, Radio Liberty Research Bulletin RL 357/85, October 31, 1985, pp. 2, 5].



held by Gorbachev's other principal advisers - A.Chernyaev, V.Zagladin, G.Shakhnazarov and I.Frolov. This team's combined efforts produced a strange but logically interrelated mixture of Marxism (international communism) and liberalism. According to Boldin, "the notion of perestroika, together with all its basic components, was mainly Yakovlev's work".<sup>9</sup>

Like anything else emanating from Marxism the doctrine of "new political thinking" was globalist. At its core lay an assumption of growing economic interdependence of the world's peoples and nations, that should lead to interdependence in all other spheres. Therefore the role of national states in world politics would progressively diminish, and that of supranational structures (UN; EEC; OSCE etc.) increase. New transnational organisations would appear, some with Soviet participation, such as the "Common European Home" advocated by Gorbachev. The trend to interdependence would inevitably lead to universalisation of life in general, and most specifically to the emergence of "universal values" common to all nations. International contradictions would become less acute, conflict potential in the world system would abate, creating prerequisites for relinquishing power politics, achieving "balance of interests" among nations, and prevalence of the rule of law in international conduct.

The problem of nationalism was very inconvenient to the "new political thinking". Nationalism contravened the doctrine's basic postulate - the growth of interdependence; on the contrary, it demonstrated diversity and contradictions among nations. Accentuating issues of nationality relations could place Gorbachev's entire scheme in jeopardy, and with it his own political standing. Hence Gorbachev tried to avoid addressing the topic of nationalism, evading a search for real solutions by sticking to traditional Soviet formulas and cliches. For example, his statements on the nationality question at the 27th CPSU Congress were entirely routine, and no new ideas found their way into the new party program. At the January 1987 Central Committee plenum he admitted the existence of problems in nationality relations, but blamed them on former leaders' mistakes.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile by alienating national elites, Gorbachev ruined Brezhnev's mechanism for running Soviet nationality affairs, without creating one of his own. Elites moved into opposition to the union centre, and Gorbachev began losing control over the republics. He apparently believed sincerely that the trend to interdependence would overwhelm nationalist sentiments, and the best policy was just to wait while the "objective laws of history" did their work.

The Kazakh national elite was the first to pose a direct and open challenge. Initially this assumed the form of a personal clash between Gorbachev and Kunayev. Gorbachev was interested in Kunayev's speedy removal for several reasons. Firstly, Kunayev was a very close associate of Brezhnev from the mid-1950s, and Gorbachev's strategy for building his own popularity consisted in

<sup>9</sup> Boldin, V., *Ten Years That Shook the World*, New York: Basic Books, 1994, p. 113.

<sup>10</sup> *Kommunist*, No.3, 1987, p. 29.

denigrating all Brezhnev's heritage. Besides, Kunayev belonged to the so called "war generation" of Soviet leaders,<sup>11</sup> which obviously made his vision of the world very different from Gorbachev's. Kunayev also headed the territorially second largest republic of the USSR, and was a full member of the Politburo. All this made his position in the party especially strong. Gorbachev had little doubt which side Kunayev would take in the event of a showdown with the conservatives on the Central Committee.

Gorbachev had been General Secretary for just three months when he delivered his first attack. The victim was A. Askarov, First Secretary of Shymkent province party committee, and a distant relative of Kunayev. He was removed from office on 10 July 1985.<sup>12</sup> There was an interesting discrepancy in comments on the event by Kazakh and Moscow media. The former criticised the provincial party organisation under Askarov's leadership for not succeeding completely "in reconstructing its style and methods of work in directing the economy", criticism not going beyond very general and vague hints of economic mismanagement,<sup>13</sup> and not unusual even in Brezhnev's time. But a *Pravda* article three days later mentioned not only economic failures, but mismanagement and corruption ignored by local party officials. Though not accusing Askarov himself of corruption, it gave the impression that he had somehow benefited by surrounding himself with the corrupt.<sup>14</sup> The striking difference between the two accounts was a clear indication that Moscow was trying to embarrass the Kazakh authorities, above all Kunayev.

Kunayev, however, did not lose his nerve. He personally had nothing to fear; subsequent investigations proved beyond doubt that he was not involved in corruption. Moreover, he himself telephoned the USSR Attorney-General in Moscow and asked him to send an experienced investigator to Kazakhstan, to deal with corruption there. The investigator, sent without delay, was V. Kalinichenko, a member of the group which had cracked down on corruption in Uzbekistan.<sup>15</sup>

Kunayev's political position inside Kazakhstan was exceptionally strong. He was not just another First Secretary, he was a leader of a national elite he himself had helped create, and whose allegiance to him was very strong. Besides, in Kunayev's years Kazakhstan had made notable economic and social progress, and living standards of ordinary citizens had also improved, to a level well above those of the mid-1950s, when he first came to office. This won Kunayev the respect of not only the national elite but also of rank and file party members. Inter-ethnic relations in Kazakhstan under Kunayev were quite stable. Like any other First Secretary in a Union Republic, Kunayev had control of his own propaganda machine. He skilfully used it to tone down Moscow's criticisms in the local, especially Kazakh language, mass media, but stopped short of anything which

<sup>11</sup> The generation that lived through the Second World War. (Kunayev was born on 12 January 1912).

<sup>12</sup> *Pravda*, 11.07.85.

<sup>13</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 14.07.85.

<sup>14</sup> *Pravda*, 14.07.85.

<sup>15</sup> Kuzmin, N., *Nochnyye besedy* // *Molodaya Gvardiya*, No.2, 1997, p. 312, 318.

would enable Gorbachev to accuse him of deviation from the party line. Thus it was very difficult for Gorbachev to remove Kunayev by democratic means.

Gorbachev chose tactics which comprised undermining Kunayev from within Kazakhstan, firstly by discrediting him in the eyes of public opinion, and secondly by destroying his power base. Subversive rumours against Kunayev began to be spread through unofficial channels,<sup>16</sup> while at the official level Gorbachev attacked Kazakhstan's economic performance. In September 1985 he visited Tselinograd, capital of the Kazakhstan Virgin Lands region, to address an inter-provincial conference of Party and business executives on agriculture, and there specifically singled out Kazakhstan for not meeting agricultural production targets.

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Gorbachev also sought allies against Kunayev among high-ranking members of the Kazakh elite. He found at least two such persons, Premier N.Nazarbayev and First Secretary of Kzyl Orda province party committee E.Auyelbekov. Both were young and ambitious, looking to succeed Kunayev in Kazakhstan's highest post, and Gorbachev exploited their vanity. Nazarbayev admitted in his memoirs that Gorbachev supported him against Kunayev because "he needed allies in the struggle with the old generation of Politburo members".<sup>18</sup> Nazarbayev attracted Moscow's attention by becoming an ardent supporter of all sorts of economic experiments in Kazakhstan, but Kunayev objected to his initiatives, and their relations deteriorated.<sup>19</sup> Significantly, Kunayev wrote in his memoirs that Nazarbayev's work in the republic's Council of Ministers "did not always go smoothly", and it had been necessary "to correct him and point out his shortcomings".<sup>20</sup>

Although it was Kunayev who had promoted Nazarbayev from the lowly position of Party Secretary at the Karaganda metallurgical plant to the second highest post in Kazakhstan, the new Premier displayed only transient loyalty to his patron. By late 1985 he was already discussing anti-Kunayev strategy in Moscow with *Pravda's* Deputy Chief Editor Valovoy, whom he told that he would have a final talk with Kunayev on "improving the situation in the economy", and if they failed to agree he would voice his criticisms at the forthcoming 16th CPK Congress.

In his report to the congress on 8 February 1986 Nazarbayev did in fact criticise Kunayev, though in veiled form. He said that "highlighting of successes and unfounded praise for leaders, which had been imposed from above for years

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<sup>16</sup> A characteristic example is "unofficial" Marxist historian R.Medvedev, who had been expelled from the CPSU in 1979 and since then regarded as a dissident. Said Medvedev: "Through Kunayev's personal connections, the corruption even spread to Moscow, even inside the Brezhnev clan... Kunayev would go to Moscow bearing expensive gifts for Brezhnev and his family, and for many other government leaders. These gifts frequently came in the form of hard cash...". [Medvedev, R., & Chiesa, G., *Time of Change: An insider's view of Russia's transformation*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1989, p. 55.]

<sup>17</sup> *Pravda*, 11.09.85.

<sup>18</sup> Nazarbayev, N., *Na poroge XXI veka*, Almaty: "Oner", 1996, p. 54.

<sup>19</sup> Valovoy, D., *Kremlevskiy tupik i Nazarbayev*, Moscow: "Molodaya Gvardiya", 1993, p. 70.

<sup>20</sup> Kunayev, D., *Ot Stalina do Gorbacheva (V aspekte istorii Kazakhstana)*, Almaty: "Sanat", 1994, pp. 277, 284, 289, 293, 305.

led to fading criticism and self-criticism, weakening of ties with the masses", and "Faulty methods of administration are not nipped, which does tremendous damage to the economy". But the major point in his criticism was a personal attack against Kunayev's younger brother Askar Kunayev, President of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences, who, he said, "has opted out of work and does not even attend meetings of the Council of Ministers". It was obvious to all that this was an indirect attack on Kunayev himself. In his autobiography Kunayev subsequently described Nazarbayev's criticism of his brother as "not objective".

Interestingly, Nazarbayev promptly passed the text of his report to Valovoy, who had come to Alma-Ata specially to observe the Congress, and Valovoy used it as the basis for an article, "Time Demands", very critical of Kazakhstan's realities. He claimed that after Nazarbayev's speech a smear campaign against him started to unfold in Kazakhstan, with fifty complaints orchestrated within a month, alleging that Nazarbayev was a power-seeker, whose major aim was to unseat and succeed Kunayev.<sup>21</sup>

Auyelbekov also criticised Kunayev at the Congress. During discussion of Kunayev's report, Auyelbekov referred to instances of corruption, window-dressing, "highlighting of successes and hushing up of shortcomings", and promotion of officials on the basis of personal loyalty, kinship and geographical origin in his province under its previous leadership. He said that the situation had existed for years, and implied that the republic's leadership knew this, but did nothing about it.<sup>22</sup> However, neither Nazarbayev nor Auyelbekov could muster any significant opposition to Kunayev. He was re-elected unopposed as Kazakhstan's First Secretary and as such led its delegation to the 27th CPSU Congress, which opened in Moscow on 25 February 1986.<sup>23</sup>

In Moscow Kunayev again became subject to criticism, this time from Gorbachev himself. Kazakhstan was one of very few regions specifically mentioned in the Central Committee report as failing to pay enough attention to "raising production efficiency" and producing "national income per unit of fixed capital one third lower than on average in the economy". That Gorbachev had to use such an abstract indicator tends to suggest that he had difficulties finding anything really incriminating against Kunayev. The general economic slowdown affected every region, and Kazakhstan was not conspicuously less successful than other republics. Gorbachev coupled his criticism of Kazakhstan with that of Turkmenistan, where the Party First Secretary had recently been dismissed, a clear hint to the delegates that Kunayev must follow suit.<sup>24</sup> But at that time Gorbachev refrained from sacking Kunayev, probably because he had no obvious successor in mind to head such a large and important republic.

<sup>21</sup> Valovoy, D., *Kremlevskiy tupik i Nazarbayev*, Moscow: "Molodaya Gvardiya", 1993, pp. 71-74, 77.

<sup>22</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 08.02.86.

<sup>23</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 9.02.86.

<sup>24</sup> XVII S'ezd Kommunisticheskoy Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza, *Stenograficheskiy otchet*, t.1, Moscow: Politizdat, 1986, pp. 59, 159-161.

Media attacks against Kunayev continued after the Congress. In July 1996 *Pravda*

published two very critical articles, one citing instances of corruption among senior Kazakh officials, the other using Kazakhstan party officials to exemplify undesirable work styles.<sup>25</sup> Kunayev was deeply offended by the Moscow press' ignoring of successes in Kazakhstan's social and economic development, and exclusive concentration on shortcomings. Later he wrote that this "conspiracy of silence" was one reason that forced his retirement.<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile in Kazakhstan, career-minded party leaders and government officials began betraying their leader to save their own jobs. In his memoirs Kunayev referred to "double-dealing members" of the republic's Central Committee who sent false information about him to Moscow.<sup>27</sup> Gorbachev also noted in his book that he had been visited more than once by province party committee secretaries, and later by a group of CPK Central Committee secretaries, led by Second Secretary Miroshkhin, which reported that "things were not going well in the republic".<sup>28</sup>

Among such "dishonest" people and "time-servers" Kunayev named only Miroshkhin, Mukashev, Kamaledenov and Mendibayev. He did not mention Nazarbayev. Meanwhile it was no secret that Kunayev actively tried to get rid of Nazarbayev. More than once he proposed removing him from the Premiership, but the CPSU Central Committee rejected the proposal. These facts are substantiated by Gorbachev, who explained Kunayev's enmity to Nazarbayev by Nazarbayev's exposure of some irregularities in allocation of funds.<sup>29</sup> If Nazarbayev was not allied with Gorbachev against Kunayev, he would have surely lost the Premiership after Kunayev's retirement.

Why did Kunayev not mention Nazarbayev's intrigues against himself? The probable answer is that when Kunayev's memoirs came to be published, Nazarbayev was already Kazakhstan's President, and in that situation Kunayev had several reasons not to write negatively about Nazarbayev, who acknowledged his restraint.<sup>30</sup> This may be called a tactical compromise between the old and the new leader. Nazarbayev received *carte blanche* to create an image of himself as Kunayev's worthy successor, and Kunayev ensured posthumous status for himself as a great leader of Kazakhstan.

In August 1986 the CPSU Central Committee passed a highly critical resolution on the state of Kazakhstan's agriculture. The resolution was not always objective in blaming all the alleged failures on Kazakhstan's leadership.<sup>31</sup> Kunayev understood that pressure for his resignation was building up. Indications of this were everywhere. Despite his membership of the Politburo, he was conspicuously

<sup>25</sup> *Pravda*, 7.07.86; 22.07.86.

<sup>26</sup> Kunayev, D., *Ot Stalina do Gorbacheva (V aspekte istorii Kazakhstana)*, Almaty: "Sanat", 1994, pp. 287-288.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 289.

<sup>28</sup> Gorbachev, M., *Zhizn' i reformy*, Kniga 1, Moscow: "Novosti", 1995, p. 497.

<sup>29</sup> Kunayev, D., *Ot Stalina do Gorbacheva (V aspekte istorii Kazakhstana)*, Almaty: "Sanat", 1994, pp. 284, 293-294; Valovoy, D., *Kremlevskiy tupik I Nazarbayev*, Moscow: "Molodaya Gvardiya", 1993, p. 78; Gorbachev, M., *Zhizn' i reformy*, Kniga 1, Moscow: "Novosti", 1995, pp. 497-498.

<sup>30</sup> Nazarbayev, N., *Na poroge XXI veka*, Almaty: "Oner", 1996, pp. 50-51.

<sup>31</sup> *Pravda*, 28.08.86.

not invited to its meeting held in early November 1986 to discuss the economic development plan for 1987. Moreover, the report delivered by Ligachev on the 69th anniversary of the October revolution did not even mention Kazakhstan as a major contributor to Soviet grain output, except for mentioning Kustanay and Kokchetav provinces, which Gorbachev had visited, as fulfilling the economic plan.

In late November Kunayev came to Moscow for the USSR Supreme Soviet session, and had a long meeting with Gorbachev, at which he gave his views on various political matters and expressed dissatisfaction with some aspects of Gorbachev's policy. "As I was leaving him I reached the final decision to retire", he recalled.<sup>32</sup> According to Gorbachev, Kunayev himself requested the meeting, during which he tried to convince Gorbachev that the complicated situation in the CPK Central Committee Bureau was the result of "intrigues" by Nazarbayev who was "yearning for power", spoke very negatively of him, kept repeating: 'This is a dangerous man. He must be stopped', and finally asked Gorbachev to transfer Nazarbayev to Moscow, or send him abroad as a Foreign Ministry representative. But Gorbachev was not convinced. It would be strange if he was, because it was he who had masterminded the intrigues against Kunayev. He told Kunayev he disagreed on the reasons for the current situation, accused him of serious errors in personnel policy, encouraging kinship or common origin ties, protecting embezzlers, and persecuting internal dissidents, and suggested they continue the discussion at a joint meeting of the Politburo and CPK Central Committee Bureau. Kunayev then offered his resignation,<sup>33</sup> to be formally submitted after Gorbachev's return from India.

In early December 1986 Kunayev visited Gorbachev for the last time, and claims that when he asked who would replace him, Gorbachev replied: "Leave the decision on this matter to us. A good Communist will be recommended and sent to the republic".<sup>34</sup> Gorbachev gave a completely different account, according to which he asked Kunayev whom he would recommend, Kunayev replied "nobody, especially among local Kazakhs", and advised that "in this difficult situation the position of First Secretary must be held by a Russian".<sup>35</sup> Which of the two was the more truthful can never be established, but Gorbachev's credibility is the more dubious; his ousting of Kunayev provoked rioting in Kazakhstan, and his replacement proved a bad choice; so he had an incentive to shift some of the blame for some very poor decision-making.

Kunayev's retirement was formally approved at the Politburo meeting on 11 December 1986, to which Kunayev was not invited, though formally still a member, and though the meeting appointed his successor. Gorbachev selected Gennadiy Kolbin, who was not an ethnic Kazakh, and had no previous ties with

<sup>32</sup> Kunayev, D., *Ot Stalina do Gorbacheva (V aspekto istorii Kazakhstana)*, Almaty: "Sanat", 1994, pp. 287-288.

<sup>33</sup> Gorbachev, M., *Zhizn' i reformy*, Kniga 1, Moscow: "Novosti", 1995, pp. 497-498.

<sup>34</sup> Kunayev, D., *Ot Stalina do Gorbacheva (V aspekto istorii Kazakhstana)*, Almaty: "Sanat", 1994, pp. 9-10.

<sup>35</sup> Gorbachev, M., *Zhizn' i reformy*, Kniga 1, Moscow: "Novosti", 1995, pp. 497-498.

Kazakhstan<sup>36</sup>, a circumstance which proved crucial for subsequent events. Only Gaydar Aliyev, Azerbaijan's First Secretary, expressed doubts about Kolbin's appointment; Gorbachev ignored them, and Kolbin's candidature was approved.<sup>37</sup> Later Gorbachev admitted that Kolbin's appointment was a mistake. "We were at the start of perestroika, and acted in a certain degree by old methods", he wrote.<sup>38</sup>

On 16 December 1986 a plenum of the CPK Central Committee took place. It was attended by Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee for organisational matters Razumovsky. The plenum was extraordinarily short - 18 minutes.<sup>39</sup> Razumovsky announced the Politburo decision on Kunayev's retirement and recommended Kolbin as new First Secretary. Nobody objected, and Kolbin was unanimously elected. Nothing foreshadowed trouble. It was like thunder on a clear day when on 18 December TASS announced that "a group of students, incited by nationalistic elements..., took to the streets of Alma-Ata expressing disapproval of the recent plenum of the Kazakhstan Communist Party Central Committee".<sup>40</sup>

Subsequent disclosures suggest that the riots were not spontaneous. Turmoil started in student dormitories on 17 December, with student activists running from one room to another, shouting "All to the square! Let's save Kunayev!" Those who refused to go were called "traitors" and beaten up. Parked near the dormitories were white Volga cars, a type available only in the Kazakhstan Council of Ministers' garage, loaded with cases of vodka which was handed out free to students who rushed out to the streets;<sup>41</sup> this at a time when Gorbachev's anti-alcohol campaign was in full swing, vodka very difficult to get, especially in large quantities.

Soon a large crowd arrived at the Central Committee building in the centre of Alma-Ata, and its occupants locked themselves in. At 11 a.m. Miroshkhin telephoned Kunayev and said that a group of young people has gathered on the central square. "They have asked to have the decisions of yesterday's Central Committee plenum explained to them. It would be good if you would speak to them and explain the gist of the matter", he said. When Kunayev arrived to the Central Committee he went straight to Kolbin's office, where all members of the Bureau were present. They discussed what to do. Kolbin suggested Nazarbayev and Kamaledenov speak to the protesters. Kunayev was not invited to speak. After talking to Moscow, Kolbin advised Kunayev to go home, saying "We will take measures ourselves and establish order". At the CPSU Central Committee plenum in June 1987 Miroshkhin confirmed that Kunayev had not been allowed to speak to

<sup>36</sup> Kolbin, Gennadiy Ethnic Chuvash. An engineer by profession. Started his party career in 1959 in Sverdlovsk. In 1975 appointed Second Party Secretary in Georgia. In this capacity worked closely with E. Shevardnadze, Gorbachev's Foreign Minister, who headed Georgia in those days. In December 1983 appointed First Secretary in Ulianovsk province, the post he held until the transfer to Kazakhstan.

<sup>37</sup> Kunayev, D., *Ot Stalina do Gorbacheva* (V aspekte istorii Kazakhstana), Almaty: "Sanat", 1994, pp. 272, 290.

<sup>38</sup> Gorbachev, M., *Zhizn' i reformy*, Kniga 1, Moscow: "Novosti", 1995, p. 498.

<sup>39</sup> Pravda, 21.09.89.

<sup>40</sup> Sheehy, A., Earlier Instances of Nationality Unrest in the USSR, Radio Liberty Research Bulletin RL 475/86, December 19, 1986, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Kuzmin, N., *Nochnyye besedy* // Molodaya Gvardiya, No.2, 1997, p. 249.

the protesters. At 1 p.m. when Kunayev was already home, Gorbachev telephoned to ask the reason for the demonstration and who had organised it. Kunayev replied that he did not know the organisers and referred Gorbachev to the republic's leadership.<sup>42</sup>

Meanwhile the protesters besieging the Central Committee building became restive at the lack of any response. Some of them moved to the TV centre, obviously planning to broadcast to the rest of the republic and incite similar demonstrations in other provinces. Such attempts were in fact made, through distributing leaflets and appeals in twelve of Kazakhstan's provincial centres, but they were unsuccessful.<sup>43</sup> The crowd burst into the TV centre, knocked out the policeman guarding the entrance and disarmed him. At the door to the studio, engineer Savitskiy, Russian by nationality, attempted to block their way. He was beaten to death. But the protesters did not know how to use the TV equipment, and failed to make any broadcasts. The disarmed policeman managed to telephone and report what was happening,<sup>44</sup> after which events began to unfold with increasing speed.

The Moscow newspapers reported that the protesters "set fire to a food store and private cars" and committed "insulting actions against citizens of the city".<sup>45</sup> They allegedly carried banners with nationalistic slogans and were later joined by "hooligans, drunkards and other anti-social individuals... armed with metal rods, sticks and stones", who "beat up and insulted citizens, overturned cars and set them on fire, and broke windows in stores, dormitories and other public buildings".<sup>46</sup> One report said they had been "excited by alcohol and narcotics", and threw "pieces of marble at unarmed volunteer police aides and policemen".<sup>47</sup> Leaders of party committees in districts of Alma-Ata inhabited by ethnic Russians formed self-defence units of Russian workers, armed with metal bars, lengths of cable and sticks. Soon clashes between the protesters on one side and Russian volunteer detachments and local police on the other were raging throughout Alma-Ata. The report of the Kazakhstan parliamentary commission of inquiry into the Alma-Ata events, released on 28 September 1990, admitted that "the behaviour of some of the demonstrators was frequently outside the law... In disobeying the forces of order they insulted them, skirmished and fought with them, stoned them and caused them bodily harm. There were irresponsible and provocative calls for illegal actions. Cars were set alight and buildings damaged".

Late on 17 December Ministry of Interior troops entered the city and began suppressing the riots. Moscow sanctioned this operation, codenamed "Metel" (Snowstorm)-86, at the request of Kazakhstan's leadership, obviously Kolbin in the first instance. The troops did not employ firearms, but used sticks, entrenching tools and dogs. According to official figures, from 2212 to 2401 participants in the

<sup>42</sup> Kunayev, D., *Ot Stalina do Gorbacheva* (V aspekte istorii Kazakhstana), Almaty: "Sanat", 1994, pp. 2911-292.

<sup>43</sup> *Izvestiya*, 07.06.88.

<sup>44</sup> Kuznin, N., *Nochnyye besedy* // *Molodaya Gvardiya*, No.2, 1997, p. 323.

<sup>45</sup> *Pravda*, 19.12.86.

<sup>46</sup> *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 01.01.87.

<sup>47</sup> *Komsomolskaya pravda*, 10.01.87.



riots were detained. The Kazakhstan parliamentary commission of inquiry gave A figure of 8500, including those who were taken outside of the city and detained there for several hours. Figures ranging from 763 to 1137 were given for the numbers injured. In the commission's assessment over 1700 people sustained bodily harm, but it did not say how many of them were Russians and how many Kazakhs. Three Kazakhs, all students, died in the events: M.Spatayev, of the Alma-Ata Institute of Power Engineering, S.Mukhamedzhanova, of Ust-Kamenogorsk Pedagogical Institute, and L.Asanova, of Alma-Ata Academy of Music.<sup>48</sup>

In the wake of the Alma-Ata events a total 99 people were convicted. One of them K.Ryskulbekov, a student at Alma-Ata Architectural College, was sentenced to death, for murdering Savitskiy.<sup>49</sup> Those tried together with Ryskulbekov were T.Tashenov, sentenced to 15 years as accessory, and another student, Zh.Taidzhumaev, for arson and attempted murder. K.Kuzembaev, a welder, was given 14 years for seriously injuring Police Major I.Zimulkin, and E.Kopesbaev four years for beating up Police Sergeant A.Almabekov.<sup>50</sup> The non-political nature of these cases is attested by the relatively long duration of the investigations. The situation was different with trials over so called "instigators" of the riots, which were held in January 1987. Zh.Sabitova, a school teacher, was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for having prepared "a poster and leaflets of provocative content".<sup>51</sup> K.Rakhmetov, student and Young Communist League leader from Kazakhstan State University, received a seven year sentence for "inciting students to flagrantly violate public order".<sup>52</sup> And M.Asylbaev, unemployed, was sentenced to ten years for "inciting" young people "to violate public order, refuse to obey representatives of the bodies of power and assault policemen, servicemen and volunteer police aides".<sup>53</sup> These were clearly political convictions. By September 1990 of those convicted 46 persons were rehabilitated and some of those not rehabilitated had their sentences reduced.<sup>54</sup>

The Alma-Ata events were a serious setback for Gorbachev, raising for the first time a question mark over his political judgement and handling of nationality affairs. The Moscow leadership was destabilised, and a clear indication of this was

<sup>48</sup> Conclusions and Proposals of the Kazakh SSR Supreme Soviet Presidium Commission for Final Appraisal of the Circumstances Linked to the Events in the City of Alma-Ata on 17th and 18th December 1986, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, Third Series, 26.10.90.

<sup>49</sup> Ryskulbekov's sentence was later commuted to long-term imprisonment, obviously to avoid further inflaming of inter-ethnic enmity. But following that he suddenly died in a supposed suicide. [Brown, B., Alma-Ata Commission of Inquiry Publishes Report // Radio Liberty, Report on the USSR, Vol.2, No.42, October 19, 1990, p. 20.] It is quite possible that he was simply eliminated by Interior Ministry personnel, who wanted to avenge the death of a Russian.

<sup>50</sup> Izvestiya, 27.07.87.

<sup>51</sup> Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 07.01.87.

<sup>52</sup> Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 11.07.87.

<sup>53</sup> Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 04.02.87.

<sup>54</sup> Conclusions and Proposals of the Kazakh SSR Supreme Soviet Presidium Commission for Final Appraisal of the Circumstances Linked to the Events in the City of Alma-Ata on 17th and 18th December 1986, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, Third Series, 26.10.90.

the abrupt postponement of the CPSU Central Committee plenum on personnel issues.<sup>55</sup> Kolbin later admitted the gravity of the situation; in his speech at the 19th CPSU Conference he said: "...The situation that arose in Kazakhstan 18 months ago caused serious concern. In that time a real threat emerged to the intended perestroyka reforms".<sup>56</sup> Gorbachev feared that events in Alma-Ata could turn the majority of the Central Committee against him. He needed some time to prepare the plenum and formulate a version of the events that suited him.

On 25 December Politburo drew its verdict. It claimed *inter alia* that "working people are vigorously condemning the manifestations of nationalism".<sup>57</sup> This reference to "manifestations of nationalism" was the first formal definition of the nature of the Alma-Ata events. Before that official reports had avoided political assessments. The Politburo version was soon upheld by the semi-official Moscow media, which started to muse on the subject of Kazakh nationalism.<sup>58</sup>

Gorbachev used the time preceding the plenum to "persuade" other members of the Central Committee, that despite the Alma-Ata events his policy was correct.<sup>59</sup> Plenum which was held on 27 January 1987, resulted in Kunayev's losing his Politburo membership, but the reason for his removal was given as "retirement on pension", and for the time being he retained his CPSU Central Committee seat. Plenum documents contained no criticism of him.<sup>60</sup> It was only in early June that Politburo officially condemned "violations of Leninist principles of nationality policy that occurred in Kazakhstan".<sup>61</sup>

At the CPSU Central Committee plenum on 25 June 1987 Kunayev was openly attacked for his policy in the field of nationality affairs. The attack was led by Kolbin, who, according to Kunayev, presented to the plenum "unchecked, unfounded data and sometimes blatant lies". Those who assisted Kolbin in preparation of this report were Kamaledenov, Mukashev and Mendibayev. Kunayev wrote that he had been portrayed as one of the principal organisers of the Alma-Ata events, though he had had absolutely no relation to it. Nevertheless this accusation served as the main reason for his dismissal from the CPSU Central Committee and a month later the CPK Central Committee.<sup>62</sup> This time the official formula sounded as follows: "For serious failures, committed in leading the republican party organisation".<sup>63</sup>

Kunayev was definitely not responsible for organising the protest action in Alma-Ata. Basically Kunayev had nothing to gain out of these events. He was

<sup>55</sup> Pravda, 24.12.86.

<sup>56</sup> XIX Vsesoyuznaya konferentsiya Kommunisticheskoy Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza, Stenograficheskiy otchet, t.1, Moscow: Politizdat, 1988, p. 104.

<sup>57</sup> Pravda, 26.12.86.

<sup>58</sup> See: Komsomolskaya pravda, 10.01.87, Literaturnaya gazeta, 14.01.87, Izvestiya, 24.01.87, Pravda, 11.02.87.

<sup>59</sup> For more information on this see: Kaiser, R., *Why Gorbachev Happened: His Triumph and His Failure*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991, pp. 151-152.

<sup>60</sup> Kommunist, No.7, 1987, p. 4.

<sup>61</sup> Pravda, 12.06.87.

<sup>62</sup> Kunayev, D., *Ot Stalina do Gorbacheva (V aspekte istorii Kazakhstana)*, Almaty: "Sanat", 1994, pp. 294-295; Pravda, 28.07.87.

<sup>63</sup> Kommunist, No.10, 1987, p. 4.

retired honourably and any subsequent trouble in the republic could only damage his reputation. He understood pretty well that under no circumstances would he get his job back, and moreover he himself did not want to stay in office any longer because of old age. Of course, Kunayev could be motivated by petty revengefulness in relation to Gorbachev, but the Alma-Ata events were clearly out of proportion with settling personal scores. Moreover, if Kunayev was really responsible for organising the events nothing could prevent him for openly announcing it after Kazakhstan became an independent state, but he did not do so. Moreover he continued to deny it.

If it was not Kunayev, then who was the major player behind the scenes? The answer to this will be, probably, never found. But one indication is contained in the minutes of the CPSU Central Committee plenum on 25 June 1987, which are still not made public. Though Kunayev in his memoirs asserted that he did not speak at the plenum, eyewitness accounts indicate otherwise. He did take the floor, disagreed with accusations against himself and said that it was Nazarbayev who had masterminded Alma-Ata riots. Though Gorbachev did not let Kunayev finish his speech, its effect on Nazarbayev was so strong that straight after the plenum he was taken to a hospital.<sup>64</sup>

From the technical point of view there were only two persons in Kazakhstan's leadership who had both the reason and resources for organizing the Alma-Ata events - Nazarbayev and Kamaledenov, both contenders for Kunayev's position.<sup>65</sup> The latter was not mentioned by Kunayev as the organizer, despite all the negative personal attitude to him. Besides, Kunayev described Kamaledenov as an active participant of the investigations of the events and the purge that followed them. Moreover, after the collapse of the USSR nothing could prevent Kamaledenov from revealing his true role in organising the events, if it had been the case, and through this portray himself as Kazakh national hero. But this never happened. On the other hand, Nazarbayev's policy of cultivating an image of Russia's friend and the one, who is treating fairly Kazakhstan's Russian community, can be still interested in not revealing the truth about his actual role in the Alma-Ata events.

The June plenum resulted in CPSU Central Committee resolution "On Work of Kazakh Republic Party Organisation in Internationalist and Patriotic Upbringing of Working People", which confirmed the definition of the Alma-Ata events as "manifestation of Kazakh nationalism". The resolution was very critical of Kunayev's record in the field of nationality affairs. The charges of nationalism were as follows. First, Moscow was dissatisfied with Kazakhstan's contribution to

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<sup>64</sup> Kunayev, D., *Ot Stalina do Gorbacheva (V aspekte istorii Kazakhstana)*, Almaty: "Sanat", 1994, p. 294; Valovoy, D., *Kremlevskiy tupik i Nazarbayev*, Moscow: "Molodaya Gvardiya", 1993, p. 80.

<sup>65</sup> For example, Auyelbekov, another contender for Kunayev's job, was based in Kzyl Orda and could not very much influence the situation in the capital.

the common all-union economic complex.<sup>66</sup> While being formally true, this charge can hardly be applicable to the case of nationalism. In the former USSR it was an open secret that every republic, or territory, disregarding its national composition, tried to keep as much economic resources as possible to themselves, while contributing to the common economic complex as little as possible.

The second set of accusations dealt with personnel policy. Kunayev was charged with creating "preferential conditions" for Kazakh young people in admission to tertiary educational institutions.<sup>67</sup> This was definitely true, but it was hardly the result of Kunayev's purposeful actions. It is more likely that this situation developed in a *de facto* manner. The growing number of Kazakh intelligentsia, who staffed major colleges and universities in accordance with eastern tradition facilitated admission to tertiary education of their relatives, friends, acquaintances and simply persons giving bribes.

Another charge was that the republic's leadership did not do enough to channel Kazakh youth to industrial professions and the number of industrial workers among Kazakhs decreased. In principle this was true, because Russians comprised 79% of those employed in industry in Kazakhstan.<sup>68</sup> But this was also a classic example of Gorbachev's attempts to explain Kazakhstan's realities in terms of Marxist dogma. Meanwhile it was only natural that Kazakhs, with their nomadic/pastoral background, were disinclined to work in industry.

The next fault cited in the resolution was the most serious one: "Proper representation of the nations and nationalities living in the republic was not ensured at all levels of the public and political structure. National-group distortion occurred in the formation of the party and state apparatus, law enforcement agencies and scientific and cultural institutions..., in admission to the Party, and in submitting names for state awards". If true, this accusation alone would be enough to justify Kunayev's removal. The principle of proportional representation in party and state apparatus was the foundation on which the whole edifice of Kazakhstan statehood had been built. For decades it had maintained stability and ethnic peace in Kazakhstan. But this allegation was not really deserved. True, Kunayev increased Kazakh participation in the leadership of both party and state apparatus, but he simply corrected distortions made in Krushchev's times. Under Kunayev the balance of Russians and Kazakhs in the leadership reflected the balance of these two nationalities in Kazakhstan's population.

The above might not have been true for scientific and cultural institutions, but that was a different matter. While Kazakhstan was part of the USSR Russian intellectuals, residing in Kazakhstan, could join respective unions in Russia or in the USSR as a whole. Many preferred to do so, since it was more prestigious and more logical, because they represented Russian, not Kazakh, culture. For Kazakhs

<sup>66</sup> Pravda, 16.07.87.

<sup>67</sup> Articles in official Moscow media substantiated this accusation. One article claimed that Kazakhs in the Alma-Ata Architectural Institute were 78%, Institute of National Economy - 73.7%, Kazakhstan State University - 75.8%, Agricultural Institute - 79.6% and Veterinary Institute - 90.4%. [Izvestiya, 24.01.87]

<sup>68</sup> Harris, Ch., *Novie russkie menshinstva: statisticheskoe obozrenie* [perevod s angliyskogo] // *Evraziyskoye soobshchestvo: ekonomika, politika, bezopasnost'*, No.2, 1995, p. 53.

it was more logical to join unions in Kazakhstan and this was the major reason for the disproportion. Where admission to the party was concerned, the preferential treatment of national minorities had been a long-term CPSU policy since the 1920s, designed to draw into the party more national cadres, who were initially more reluctant than Slavs to join. In time this policy became outdated, but it stood unchanged up to Gorbachev's period. It was, of course, not Kunayev's creation, and accusing him of initiating it was inappropriate.

The third group of charges brought against Kunayev concerned ideology. The resolution blamed the CPK Central Committee and lower-level party committees of failing "to examine questions of internationalist education for years". The "faults" depicted in the resolution can be summarised as follows:

1. In historical research, literature and art, the Kazakh people's past was "frequently idealised", and attempts were made to rehabilitate "bourgeois nationalists".
2. The revolutionary past of the people of Kazakhstan, and their struggle to establish Soviet power and socialism, were "essentially passed over in silence".
3. The struggle against "feudal-bay" and "patriarchal-tribal" customs was allowed to slacken.
4. No effective measures were taken "to expose the reactionary essence of Islam and its attempts to preserve outmoded traditions".

It is obvious, that certain idealisation of Kazakh past did take place in historical research. But such a situation is not uncommon for most other nations, including Russia. Moscow was only itself to blame that under the practices of a totalitarian society, Gorbachev himself still adhered to, no free polemics on historical issues, including that of Kazakh nation had been allowed.<sup>69</sup> In all, the resolution made a controversial impression. It contained a number of observations that were certainly true, but presented them through a prism of Marxist dogmatism creating a distorted picture of a socially complex phenomenon. The document was strongly influenced by Gorbachev's vendetta against Kunayev, which had by then become personal and could not contribute to a fair analysis of facts. Besides, the resolution had a clear political designation - by making Kunayev a scapegoat, shield from criticism Gorbachev and his lieutenants for the outbreak of the Alma-Ata events.

Moscow's official assessment of the Alma-Ata events caused hidden and later open resistance by the Kazakh elite. At the eighth CPK Central Committee plenum in March 1987 no Kazakh leader used the definition "nationalism", when characterising the situation in the republic. Chairman of the Presidium of the Kazakhstan Supreme Soviet Mukashev attributed the riots to "Comrade Kunayev's personality cult" and described the protesters as "inexperienced, politically immature young people". Only Kzyl-Orda province Party Committee First Secretary Auyelbekov, referred to "nationalism". But even he mentioned it in a

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<sup>69</sup> Pravda, 16.07.87.

casual, incidental manner, not attributing it to Kazakhs as such, but describing "propagating nationalism" as a fault of Kunayev.

Kolbin clearly sensed this mood, and could not ignore it. On the other hand he had to advance the official line. Hence his compromise formula: "...Extremist-minded nationalistic elements are few in number and do not constitute any sort of organisation... we have no right to, pin a label of nationalism on the Kazakh people as a whole".<sup>70</sup> The plenum consequently adopted the formula that Kunayev must be held accountable "for flagrant violations of the norms of party life, creation of a personality cult, distortion of personnel policy and manifestation of an "anything goes" attitude which led to the development... of favouritism, abuse of office, bribe-taking and to nationalistic and other negative manifestations".<sup>71</sup> That "nationalistic manifestations" were submerged among other faults, and equated with "other negative manifestations" was a victory for the Kazakh elite. It met their wishes by not making nationalism the major issue.

Not surprisingly the CPSU Central Committee resolution's accusation of "Kazakh nationalism" was received very negatively by the Kazakh elite. Thereafter various Kazakh politicians, officials and intellectuals insisted on its revocation. According to Gorbachev, Nazarbayev was very active in lobbying Moscow for this purpose. Finally Gorbachev agreed, and the accusation of "Kazakh nationalism" was partially acknowledged as mistaken. The new formulation said that there were demonstrations by young people, provoked by extremist and nationalist elements. Thus the formula was mitigated, but in essence unaltered. Moreover, the Politburo decision revoking the previous formulation was published only in the restricted-circulation CPSU Central Committee bulletin *Izvestiya CK KPSS*, while the initial resolution had been published in central Moscow newspapers with circulations in the tens of millions. This prompted sharp criticism by the Commission of Inquiry into the Alma-Ata events, established by the Kazakhstan Supreme Soviet Presidium. It said that the decision "does not contain so much as a hint that the authorities even partially admit their guilt". In the commission's own assessment the Alma-Ata events "were not nationalist... They were a first attempt to exercise the right freely to express a civic and political position". Gorbachev, however, remained unmoved by the commission's findings. He clearly remains convinced that the initial definition of the events was right. "A word is not a sparrow, history cannot be corrected", he concluded in his memoirs.<sup>72</sup>

The official Kazakh interpretation of the nature of the Alma-Ata events is indeed very contradictory. On the one hand they continue to maintain that the events were not nationalist, but on the other it is difficult to deny facts known to every citizen of Alma-Ata who saw them. The crowd carried banners, which said "Kazakhstan for Kazakhs!", and "Russians, Go Home!", attacked and insulted only

<sup>70</sup> Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 15.03.87.

<sup>71</sup> Pravda, 16.03.87.

<sup>72</sup> Conclusions and Proposals of the Kazakh SSR Supreme Soviet Presidium Commission for Final Appraisal of the Circumstances Linked to the Events in the City of Alma-Ata on 17th and 18th December 1986, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, Third Series, 26.10.90; Gorbachev, M., *Zhizn' i reformy*, Kniga 1, Moscow: "Novosti", 1995, pp. 498-499.

Russians, overturned and burned a car driven by a Russian,<sup>73</sup> and finally killed a Russian TV engineer. Moreover, after independence the Kazakh authorities themselves showed an inclination to attach nationalist overtones to the Alma-Ata riots. Kazakhstan's independence was symbolically proclaimed on 16 December, the anniversary of the day when they began; since then the day has become Kazakhstan's national holiday and the riots are always commemorated in that context. Most controversially, on 9 December 1996, just before the tenth anniversary of the events, Nazarbayev conferred Kazakhstan's highest award posthumously on Ryskulbekov, who was executed for killing the Russian TV engineer.<sup>74</sup> Referring to the riots in his memoirs, he asserted that they showed "to what extent the self-awareness of Kazakh youth has grown... The youth, on behalf of the people, openly stated that it will no longer tolerate trampling on the national pride", he wrote.<sup>75</sup> Kazakhstan's State Secretary A. Kekilbaev, in a tenth-anniversary commemorative article, went even further, characterising the riots as a popular "national-liberation" and "anti-colonial" uprising, "the first quake in the process of disintegration of the "Red empire".<sup>76</sup> It seems the Kazakh authorities want to have it both ways not wanting to admit the presence of nationalism in the riots, but at the same time portraying them as a major milestone on the way to independence.

Following the riots Kolbin faced the difficult task of putting in order what proved to be an unstable republic. He approached the problem with a vigour typical for a myopic bureaucrat. One of his first steps was a vigorous campaign directed against "parasitic"<sup>77</sup> elements and alcohol abuse, similar to that staged elsewhere in the USSR. The campaign's primary purpose was to remove potential troublemakers, primarily Kazakh youths, from major cities, for fear of repetition of the Alma-Ata events.

However, his main effort was concentrated on intimidating the Kazakh national elite. Kazakhstan's party and state apparatus was substantially purged. In all, 1836 members of party committees and bureaus and 450 secretaries of primary Party organisations were removed from office.<sup>78</sup> The purge strongly affected Kazakhstan's tertiary education system, which seemed reasonable to Kolbin, since most of the demonstrators were students. Many government officials responsible for education, senior academics in universities and active participants in the riots were either sacked or reprimanded. Some 787 persons were expelled from the Young Communist League, and 1138 received lesser penalties.<sup>79</sup>

Another feature of Kolbin's policy was populist measures in the socio-economic sphere. He began taking steps aimed at producing an immediate positive

<sup>73</sup> Kuzmin, N., *Nochnyye besedy // Molodaya Gvardiya*, No.2, 1997, pp. 249-250.

<sup>74</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 11.12.96.

<sup>75</sup> Nazarbayev, N., *Na poroge XXI veka*, Almaty: "Oner", 1996, p. 37.

<sup>76</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 12.11.96.

<sup>77</sup> By "parasites" officials meant people refusing to work. In Kazakhstan this term applied to a large number of young, poorly educated Kazakhs from auls, who flocked to large cities but were unable to find jobs and formed a sort of city "underclass".

<sup>78</sup> *Pravda*, 24.04.87.

<sup>79</sup> *Komsomolskaya pravda*, 18.07.82.

impact on public opinion, and at the same time indirectly decrying Kunayev's record as a leader. They included a program of housing construction, decree on improving study of the Kazakh Language and elimination of some privileges enjoyed previously by party and government officials.<sup>80</sup> However, these superficial measures could not improve the economic situation; they engendered increasing hatred of Moscow among the Kazakh elite, but did nothing to make ordinary people better off. More substantial long-term policies were needed, but were not forthcoming. Kolbin failed to achieve any positive results in the sphere of livestock breeding, and the 1987 grain harvest was plagued by bad weather. In the 1987-1988 economic year Kazakhstan failed to attain the national income growth rates envisaged by the five-year plan.<sup>81</sup>

Kazakhstan's unimpressive economic performance, and the emergence of nationalist movements elsewhere in the USSR, created a favourable atmosphere for revival of anti-Russian opposition in the republic. But intimidated by the brutal suppression of the Alma-Ata riots and subsequent purges, it acted with exceptional caution, most of its resistance taking passive forms. On 4 February 1988 *Kazakhstanskaya pravda* reported the activities of S. Adenov, a lecturer in Marxism-Leninism, who wrote a manuscript on the nationality question, and distributed it in many cities of Kazakhstan. Adenov skilfully used Lenin's criticism of Russian great-power chauvinism to condemn Gorbachev's nationality policy in general and particularly in Kazakhstan, where he claimed the Alma-Ata riots were its direct consequence.<sup>82</sup> In December 1988 the "Akikat" historical and educational club came into being. Its aim was revival of Kazakh folk customs and learning of Kazakh history, with a view to restoring the truth about the "genocide against Kazakhs in the 1920's-30's" and the fate of Kazakh national organisations.

On 3 November 1988 activists of ecological organisations "Green Front", "Initiative" and "Referendum" proclaimed establishment of a political organisation, the Alma-Ata People's Front. But it did little, and on 30 April 1989 it self-liquidated. Probably the most serious organisation representing Kazakh national sentiments in that period was the "Nevada-Semipalatinsk" anti-nuclear movement, created on the initiative of Kazakh poet Olzhas Suleimenov. It staged public meetings, demonstrations, congresses, and addressed resolutions to the authorities. Its proclaimed goals were the elimination of nuclear weapons and socio-economic rehabilitation of regions adversely affected by nuclear tests. But its main purpose, termination of nuclear testing at the Semipalatinsk test site, reflected opposition to Moscow's administrative control of Kazakhstan.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>80</sup> See: *Izvestiya*, 15.03.87; *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 11.01.87; *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 05.03.87; Brown, B., New First Secretary in Kazakhstan Notes Some Successes, *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin* RL 258/87, July 2, 1987, p. 1-2.

<sup>81</sup> *Izvestiya*, 28.10.95.

<sup>82</sup> Sheehy, A., Kazakh Lecturer Disseminates Unorthodox Views on Nationality Question, *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin* RL 81/88, February 18, 1988, p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> Zaslavskaya, M., *Politicheskie partii i obshchestvennyye ob'edineniya Kazakhstana na sovremennom etape razvitiya*, Almaty: KISI, 1994, pp. 7, 9-10, 16-17.



Another form of opposition was a campaign started by influential Kazakh literary personalities for rehabilitation of Kazakh poets and writers who had been branded "bourgeois nationalists" in Stalin's years. In late February 1988 Kazakh writer A.Nurpeisov called for rehabilitation of Qudayberdiev, an outstanding early twentieth century Kazakh poet.<sup>84</sup> Then at the USSR Writers' Union Board plenum on 1-2 March, Kazakh writer M.Shakhanov called for "objective critical assessment" of the works of several Kazakh literary figures - Qudayberdiev, Aymautov, Baytursynov and Zhumabayev.<sup>85</sup> The last three had been Alash Orda leaders. Another Alash Orda leader to become a focus of public attention was Tinishbayev, the subject of a full-length film entitled "Turksib" (the Turkestan-Siberia Railway, a major construction project of the late 1920s). The Kazakh press enthusiastically praised the film.<sup>86</sup> At the CPK Central Committee plenum on 4 June 1988, Kazakh Writers' Union President Suleimenov proposed establishing a commission to study the works of writers and scholars repressed in the 1930s.<sup>87</sup> In April 1989 "Adilet", a society for the rehabilitation of victims of political repression, was formed. Its aims included rehabilitation of participants in the Alma-Ata riots.<sup>88</sup>

The major objective pursued by the Kazakh national elite in that period was Kolbin's removal. Attacks against him started at the CPK Central Committee plenum in late January 1988, when some Kazakh party officials, portraying themselves as supporters of Gorbachev's reforms, accused Kolbin of issuing too many directives, holding too many conferences, and too closely monitoring the work of agencies and party committees. Several speakers claimed that his administrative techniques shackled Party bodies, and robbed them of autonomy.<sup>89</sup> In this Kolbin's critics artfully used Gorbachev's initiatives, some of which implied limiting bureaucratic procedures.

A real chance for Kolbin's removal arrived in mid-1989, sparked by events in Tbilisi on 9 April, when sixteen people were killed and over 200 injured in clashes with army troops. The events, very reminiscent of the December 1986 Alma-Ata riots, were widely publicised in Moscow's liberal press, while Gorbachev denied responsibility for what had happened. They occurred shortly before the convening on 25 May of the First Congress of USSR Peoples' Deputies, the new highest body of power created by the political reform. The Congress convened in a politically tense atmosphere. Opposition deputies demanded proper investigation of the Tbilisi events, and on 31 May the Congress voted to create a commission of

<sup>84</sup> Sheehy, A., Renewed Appeal for Rehabilitation of Kazakh Poet, Radio Liberty Research Bulletin RL 107/88, March, 10, 1988, p. 1-2.

<sup>85</sup> Literaturnaya gazeta, No.10, 1988.

<sup>86</sup> Sheehy, A., Kazakh Party Scholar Condemns Rehabilitation of Muhametjan Tinishbayev, Radio Liberty Research Bulletin 266/88, June 16, 1988, p. 2.

<sup>87</sup> In mid-December 1988 a brief formal announcement from the Attorney-General stated that the Kazakhstan Supreme Court had annulled the convictions of Zhumabayev, Baytursynov and Aymautov on grounds of lack of evidence. [Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 08.07.88]

<sup>88</sup> Zaslavskaya, M., Politicheskie partii i obshchestvennye obiedineniya Kazakhstana na sovremennom etape razvitiya, Almaty: KISI, 1994, p. 12.

<sup>89</sup> Pravda, 4.02.87.

inquiry. Kazakhstan was represented on the Commission by Nazarbayev and Miroshnik.<sup>90</sup>

This gave the Kazakhs their chance. On 6 June Kazakh writer Shakhanov, speaking on behalf of 19 deputies from Kazakhstan, requested establishment of a commission to investigate the Alma Ata events.<sup>91</sup> Gorbachev, already on the defensive over Tbilisi, was eager to avoid the embarrassment establishment of a second commission would entail. The Kazakh delegation's price for dropping the issue was Kolbin's removal. On the next day, 7 June, Gorbachev successfully proposed Kolbin's election as Chairman of the People's Control Committee, which meant transferring him to Moscow. The next important issue was: who would be Kazakhstan's new leader? The Kazakh elite did not want a repetition of the December 1986 appointment of an outsider as First Secretary. But nobody knew precisely what Gorbachev had in mind, so pressure had to be applied, and subsequent events in the town of Novy Uzen, repeating the pattern of those in Tselinograd in 1979 and Alma Ata in 1986, most suited that purpose.

On the night of 16-17 June disturbances were sparked by a dance-floor fight between Kazakh youths and Azerbaijani, Lezgin and other migrant oilfield workers in Novy Uzen. The police suppressed it, and made several arrests. A group of Kazakh youths then tried to break into the police station, but fled after warning shots were fired.<sup>92</sup> This incident may have been spontaneous, but what happened next implied some kind of organisation. Next morning a rally was held in the central square of Novy Uzen, at which protesters, 5000-7000 strong, demanded release of those arrested, expulsion of migrant contract workers, and jobs for all unemployed Kazakhs. Groups of Kazakhs then began attacking market stalls and homes, and setting cars on fire. Altogether 51 facilities were damaged, 5 vehicles burned, 5 persons killed and 20 hospitalised. 3,516 people fled to the Caucasus. According to Kazakhstan Internal Affairs Minister Knyazev, the rioters' actions were well organised.<sup>93</sup> Interior Ministry troops and police reinforcements were dispatched to Novy Uzen, and a curfew imposed. The disturbances then began spreading to nearby areas, and tension increased throughout Kazakhstan.<sup>94</sup>

In this situation, selection of Nazarbayev as Kazakhstan's leader seemed almost inevitable. The events in Novy Uzen had driven Gorbachev into a corner; an appointment from outside Kazakhstan was now out of the question, and in the tense situation even appointing a Russian from Kazakhstan problematic. The message to Gorbachev was clear: if he wished the inter-ethnic tension to subside, he must select a Kazakh capable of controlling the indigenous nationality. And what better choice than Nazarbayev, who had helped Gorbachev to remove Kunayev and ardently supported Gorbachev's reforms? On 22 June 1989

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<sup>90</sup> Pravda, 1.06.89.

<sup>91</sup> Izvestiya, 8.06.89.

<sup>92</sup> Pravda, 20.06.89; Izvestiya, 20.06.89.

<sup>93</sup> Izvestiya, 21.06.89; Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 27.12.89; Pravda, 23.06.89.

<sup>94</sup> Izvestiya, 23.06.89; Izvestiya, 24.06.89, Pravda, 25.06.89.

Nazarbayev was elected First Secretary of the CPK Central Committee,<sup>95</sup> and the disturbances in Kazakhstan immediately ceased.

Straight after his election Nazarbayev took steps to boost his popularity, by appealing to Kazakh national sentiments. On 26 June 1989 the Presidium of Kazakhstan's Supreme Soviet established a Commission of Inquiry into the Alma-Ata events. Eight of its fourteen members were Kazakhs, including all three co-Chairmen, versus only four ethnic Russians and two from other nationalities. Thus Kazakhs were in a position to reach whatever findings they saw fit, and Russian representation little more than token.<sup>96</sup>

Nationalist overtones were also perceptible in Kazakhstan's Law on Languages, enacted by the Supreme Soviet on 29 August 1989. Article 1 proclaimed Kazakh the only state language in Kazakhstan, assigning to Russian a secondary status, as the "language of inter-ethnic communication".<sup>97</sup> This was probably Nazarbayev's first move that contributed to the growth of inter-ethnic tensions, as Kazakhs were not a majority of Kazakhstan's population. The following table shows its ethnic composition at the 1989 census.

**Table 1.1**  
**Population of Kazakhstan by Nationality in thousands and as**  
**a percentage to the total (1989 census)<sup>98</sup>**

Nationality	Kazakhs	Russians	Ukrainians	Belorussians	Tatars	Uzbeks	Germans	Others
Number of people	6534.6	6227.5	896.2	182.6	328.0	332.0	957.5	840.7
As % to the total	39.7	37.8	5.4	1.1	2.0	2.0	5.8	6.2

The table shows that Kazakhstan was a typical multinational state, in which Kazakhs were the largest ethnic group, but not a majority. Moreover they were still numerically inferior to the combined Slavic population, who generally identified themselves as Russian-speakers. Naturally those were unimpressed by a Law on Languages which did not assign Russian equal status with Kazakh. A small group of Russian deputies in the Supreme Soviet protested, and Ust-Kamenogorsk City Soviet even passed a special resolution on the need for two state languages. But all that was ignored.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Pravda, 23.06.89.

<sup>96</sup> Conclusions and Proposals of the Kazakh SSR Supreme Soviet Presidium Commission for Final Appraisal of the Circumstances Linked to the Events in the City of Alma-Ata on 17th and 18th December 1986, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, Third Series, 26.10.90.

<sup>97</sup> Law of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic on Languages, 22 August 1989 // Perestroika in the Soviet Republics, Documents on the National Questions / Ed. Ch.F.Furtado & A.Chandler, Oxford: Westview Press, 1992, p. 479.

<sup>98</sup> Source: Brown, B., Kazakhs Now Largest National Group in Kazakhstan, Radio Liberty, Report on the USSR, Vol.2, No.18, May 4, 1990, p. 19.

<sup>99</sup> Rossiyskaya gazeta, 05.06.93.

Nazarbayev's ascendancy also opened the way for nationalist parties and movements to emerge. In June 1989 Kazakhs who had taken part in the Alma-Ata riots formed the Zheltoksan (December) political society. Its initial aim was to achieve the rehabilitation of those convicted following the riots. A year later Zheltoksan conducted a founding congress at which it renamed itself the National Democratic Party Zheltoksan. Members of it advocated excluding Russian from official use, even for inter-ethnic communication, banning Russian immigration to Kazakhstan, and adoption of legislation creating Kazakhstan citizenship.<sup>100</sup>

In April 1990 the founding congress of the Alash party took place. Its political program was based on Muslim solidarity and pan-Turkism, and envisaged creation of a Greater Turkestan (Land of Turks), including Kazakhstan, Central Asia, Azerbaijan and ultimately Turkic republics within the Russian Federation. Among its more immediate goals the party named state regulation of migration, assisting Kazakhs residing in other states to immigrate to Kazakhstan, and encouraging non-Kazakhs, especially Russians, to leave. Though the party proclaimed itself successor to Alash Orda, its aims were conspicuously different.<sup>101</sup>

In May 1990 another public movement, Azat (Freedom) came into being. It proclaimed such slogans as freedom, equality and fraternity of all citizens of Kazakhstan, creation of civil society in the republic, but its major aim was achieving Kazakhstan's sovereignty, i.e. independence. Azat leaders vehemently denied that their movement was nationalist, and tried to prove its "democratic" nature, but some of its actions and statements by its leaders offensive to (and about) ethnic Russians indicated otherwise.<sup>102</sup>

Nazarbayev encouraged the "Nevada-Semipalatinsk" movement's activities, either out of agreement with its objectives or through unwillingness to risk losing the political initiative to Suleimenov, another prominent personality in Kazakh politics. Whichever is the case, Kazakhstan's official position on nuclear testing was only slightly less radical than that of "Nevada-Semipalatinsk". In early June 1990 the 17th CPK Congress, and in early August 1991 the CPK Politburo, adopted resolutions demanding closure of the Semipalatinsk test site.<sup>103</sup> Nazarbayev closed it by decree on 29 August 1991, as soon as the changed political situation in Moscow undermined the USSR Government.

The creation of various Kazakh nationalist parties and movements promoted similar actions by Kazakhstan's Russian population. On 29 August 1990

<sup>100</sup> Azat Leader on Need for Unified Democratic Movement in Kazakhstan, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, Third Series, 04.12.91; Zaslavskaya, M., *Politicheskie partii i obshchestvennyye ob'edineniya Kazakhstana na sovremennom etape razvitiya*, Almaty: KISI, 1994, p. 12.

<sup>101</sup> Alash Orda's leaders were European-educated Kazakhs, many of them members of the Russian State Duma and of the Constitutional Democratic Party, which espoused Western liberal ideas. Their program envisaged Kazakh autonomy within the empire, not secession from it. Pan-Turkism was alien to them, and not even mentioned in their program. [For more information on this issue see: Alash Orda: *Sbornik dokumentov* / ed. N.Martinenko, Alma-Ata: "Aykap", 1992; Amanzhalova, D.A., *Kazakhskiy avtonomizm i Rossiya: istoriya dvizheniya Alash*, Moscow: "Rossiya Molodaya", 1994].

<sup>102</sup> Zaslavskaya, M., *Politicheskie partii i obshchestvennyye ob'edineniya Kazakhstana na sovremennom etape razvitiya*, Almaty: KISI, 1994, pp. 13-15.

<sup>103</sup> CP of Kazakhstan Congress: Independent Platform Adopted, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, Third Series, 18.06.90

the founding conference of the Edinstvo (Unity) movement took place in Alma-Ata. It united mostly Russian industrial workers, and established branches in several provinces, mostly among workers in defence industries. Edinstvo proclaimed its major goals to be promotion of the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and prevention of inter-ethnic violence, but also warned that it would fight "aggressive manifestations of chauvinism and nationalism". Edinstvo insisted that both Russian and Kazakh be recognised as state languages.<sup>104</sup>

The year 1990 also saw the emergence of the first Cossack formations in Kazakhstan. They began to register in provincial centres as national and cultural associations, but their activities were clearly political. In summer 1990 in the northern provinces the "Gorkaya Liniya"<sup>105</sup> Cossacks formed an organisation, and elected V.Achkasov as ataman (leader). At about the same time the "Vozrozhdeniye" (Rebirth) Cossack committee was established in Uralsk. It demanded revoking of all decrees on the basis of which the territory of the Ural Cossacks was transferred from Russia to Kazakhstan.<sup>106</sup> In an article in *Moskovskiy novosti* in June 1991 "Vozrozhdeniye's" ataman, Alexander Galagan, proclaimed northern Kazakhstan and Alma-Ata province zones of Cossack interests and ancient Russian lands erroneously allotted to Kazakhstan.<sup>107</sup> In early 1991 the Union of Semirechye Cossacks came into being. For some time it was headed by V.Ovsyannikov, a former Airborne Forces officer, but later he was replaced by N.Gunkin.<sup>108</sup> The Cossack formations were the most dynamic and best-organised among the Russian groups in Kazakhstan. From the outset they established firm links with their counterparts in Russia. For example, representatives of the Ural Cossacks took part in the founding congress of the Union of Cossacks of Russia held in Moscow on 28 June 1990.<sup>109</sup>

The Cossacks were not alone in expressing separatist views. Non-Cossack representatives of the Russian community voiced similar sentiments. For example, in September 1989 the East Kazakhstan province newspaper *Rudnyi Altai* published an article by USSR People's Deputy S.Vasilyeva, who argued that the lands along the right bank of the Irtysh river were wrongly allocated to Kazakhstan in 1920, as their indigenous population was Russian. This article received an indignant response from the Kazakhstan Communist Party newspaper,

<sup>104</sup> Zaslavskaya, M., *Politicheskie partii i obshchestvennyye ob'edineniya Kazakhstana na sovremennom etape razvitiya*, Almaty: KISI, 1994, pp. 15-16; *Rabochaya tribuna*, 27.04.91. Azat Chairman Attacks Lack of Kazakh Sovereignty, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, Part 1, The USSR, Second Series, 18.01.91.

<sup>105</sup> "Sorrow Line" - this was the name of the line of Russian fortresses from Kurgan to Petropavlovsk, which separated Russian territory from the Steppe.

<sup>106</sup> Possibility of Inter-Ethnic Conflict in Kazakhstan Viewed, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, Part 1, The USSR, Second Series, 29.09.90.

<sup>107</sup> Kazakh Writer Appeals to Gorbachev over Cossack Territorial Claims, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, Part 1, The USSR, Second Series, 06.07.91.

<sup>108</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiei E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, pp. 208-209.

<sup>109</sup> Abdirov, M., Abdirova B., *Kazachestvo v kontekste sovremennykh kazakhstansko-rossiyskikh otnosheniy // Kazakhstan i mirovye soobshchestva*, No. 2(3), 1995, p. 58.

*Kazakhstanskaya pravda*.<sup>110</sup> In September 1990 Kazakh nationalist organisations held a massive rally in Alma-Ata condemning Russian separatists. Growth of separatist attitudes among ethnic Russians did in fact become a major problem for Nazarbayev's leadership. At a press conference on 24 September 1990 CPK Central Committee Second Secretary Anufriyev said "separatist tendencies" caused "particular alarm".<sup>111</sup>

The first serious confrontation between Cossacks and Kazakhs took place on 14-15 September 1991 in Uralsk, where "Vozrozhdeniye" arranged festivities to celebrate 400 years of the Ural Cossack Force, attended by the Ataman of the Union of Cossacks of Russia A.Martinov, one of his deputies V.Naumov, and Cossack representatives from the Don, Kuban, North Caucasus, Southern Urals and Siberia. During the celebrations the tricolour flag of the Russian Empire was unfurled. At the same time members of Azat, Zheltoksan and Nevada-Semipalatinsk movements came to Uralsk from Alma-Ata, Shymkent, Aktyubinsk and a number of other towns in Kazakhstan. The situation had the potential to develop into serious inter-ethnic conflict, but the law enforcement agencies managed to confine it to a few minor clashes.<sup>112</sup>

The events in Uralsk prompted Nazarbayev to protest to Yeltsin that "provocative actions, staged by Cossacks on 15 September this year on the territory of Kazakhstan under the Russian flag were perceived by people and public movements of the republic as a political act demonstrating open disregard for the state sovereignty of Kazakhstan", and to stress that the events created a serious threat "to civic accord and socio-political stability in the republic". Nazarbayev also said that if the Russian leadership had given a timely assessment of the seriousness of the problems connected with the Cossack movement's unfounded claims, which ran contrary to previous agreements, the Kazakh leaders would not have had to face such unconsidered actions.<sup>113</sup> The Kazakhstan Supreme Soviet Presidium described the Uralsk celebrations as an "attempt to artificially import inter-ethnic conflicts".<sup>114</sup> There was no public response from Yeltsin.

The growth of ethnic nationalism did not leave the Russian Federation untouched. The reasons for this were basically the same as in other Union republics, though the process had some specific features. Ethnic nationalism was a concept relatively new to Russians, because the Russian elite traditionally perceived the country as a multi-ethnic state, first as an empire and later the USSR,

<sup>110</sup> Carlson, Ch., Kazakhs Refute Russian Territorial Claims // Radio Liberty, Report on the USSR, Vol.2, No.32, August 10, 1990, pp. 18-19.

<sup>111</sup> Possibility of Inter-Ethnic Conflict in Kazakhstan Viewed, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, Part 1, The USSR, Second Series, 29.09.90.

<sup>112</sup> Clashes prevented between Cossacks and Kazakhs in Uralsk, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 18.09.91; Abdirov, M., Abdirova B., Kazachestvo v kontekste sovremennykh kazakhstansko-rossiyskikh otnosheniy // Kazakhstan i mirovoe soobshchestvo, No. 2(3), 1995, p. 57; Kurtov, A., Politicheskie partii i dvizheniya Kazakhstana // Novaya Evraziya, No.2, 1994, p. 53.

<sup>113</sup> Nazarbayev Protests to Yeltsin over Cossack Celebrations in Uralsk, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 20.09.91.

<sup>114</sup> Abdirov, M., Abdirova B., Kazachestvo v kontekste sovremennykh kazakhstansko-rossiyskikh otnosheniy // Kazakhstan i mirovoe soobshchestvo, No. 2(3), 1995, p. 58.

though Russians, not surprisingly, ascribed the role of leading nation to themselves. But Russian ethnic nationalism meant something other than recognition of the leading role of Russians in a multinational community. Its primary goal was national self-identification of ethnic Russians within the Soviet Union. The first public organisation to openly proclaim its adherence to the above ideology was the national-patriotic movement "Pamyat". This organisation was formed within the All-Russian Society for Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments in the mid-1970's, for the purpose of renovating and restoring old buildings of historical or cultural value, primarily churches. Soon, however, "Pamyat" found itself involved in politics.

In late May 1987 "Pamyat" conducted its first rally at the Manezh square in the centre of Moscow. The demonstrators carried banners saying "Save Our Monuments", and demanded official registration of their organisation. Surprisingly, representatives of "Pamyat" were received by Yeltsin, then First Secretary of the Moscow City Party Committee and a Candidate (non-voting) Member of the Politburo. By the standards of those days this was an unprecedented and courageous move on Yeltsin's part. According to reports Yeltsin and the "Pamyat" deputation had a heated discussion that lasted for two hours. Yeltsin allegedly agreed with the members of the deputation on a number of issues, while disagreeing on others,<sup>115</sup> but unfortunately, the reports do not specify the issues on which they agreed or disagreed. However, it seems likely that the meeting, Yeltsin's first encounter with a political process outside the official Party bureaucracy, influenced the evolution of his political views.

In a manifesto of 12 January 1989 "Pamyat" unveiled its political program, which among other things demanded that the Russian people "have rights equal to those of other peoples in our country". The manifesto called for establishment of Russia's own Academy of Sciences, Conservatory of Music, Institute for Russian History, Center for Russian Culture, Russian Theatre, Russian Film Industry, publication of Russian Encyclopedia, and demanded introduction of "proportional national representation in the governing apparatus, and also in art, science, and education". The manifesto did not call for dissolution of the Soviet Union, but argued for providing all Union republics with "true autonomy", putting special emphasis on "economic autonomy".<sup>116</sup> This, obviously, implied economic autonomy for Russia, virtually a call for economic separation.

The idea of Russia's political separation from the USSR, though hypothetical, was soon also in the air, openly voiced by a prominent Russian writer, Valentin Rasputin, at the Congress of People's Deputies in June 1989.<sup>117</sup> His high public profile immediately gave the idea a touch of political respectability. In December 1989 twelve public organisations sharing the concept of Russian

<sup>115</sup> Yeltsin's Meeting with Memory Association Example of "Glasnost", BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, Part 1, The USSR, Second Series, 26.05.87.

<sup>116</sup> Manifesto of the National-Patriotic Front "Pamyat" // *Perestroika in the Soviet Republics, Documents on the National Question* / Ed. Ch.F.Fartado and A.Chandler, Oxford: Westview Press, 1992, pp. 314-316.

<sup>117</sup> Brzezinski, Z., *Post-Communist Nationalism* // *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 68, No 5, Winter 1989/90, p. 15.

ethnic nationalism formed the Bloc of Russian Public-Patriotic Movements to contest the RSFSR Supreme Soviet elections scheduled for 4 March 1990.<sup>118</sup> The Bloc's program included such tasks as creating a Russian Communist Party; providing for Russia's equal and proportional representation in the Union's administrative bodies; achieving greater autonomy from the USSR government; giving Russia full control over its natural resources; eliminating economic subsidies to other republics; and in case of the USSR's disintegration, Russia's taking control of territory populated by ethnic Russians in other republics.<sup>119</sup>

In 1990 the concept of Russian ethnic nationalism received a powerful new boost from the well-known emigre writer, Alexander Solzhenitsyn. His pamphlet "Rebuilding Russia" was published in September by two Moscow central newspapers with a total circulation of 25 million copies. Solzhenitsyn argued for Russia to secede from the USSR and form a common statehood with the other two Slavic republics, Ukraine and Belorussia. With regard to Kazakhstan Solzhenitsyn offered two options, total annexation by Russia or partition into an independent Kazakh south and a Russian north incorporated into the Russian state.<sup>120</sup> Solzhenitsyn's ideas, representing a conservative trend in Russian ethnic nationalism, could not fail to influence wide sectors of Russian public opinion, and even received qualified support from liberal politicians in Yeltsin's entourage, with positive reactions voiced by Y.Karyakin, G.Yakunin, G.Starovoitova and others. Yeltsin himself embraced Solzhenitsyn's vision of Russia's future, and was so impressed by the article that he ordered it photocopied and distributed to all members of the Russian parliament. The article, he asserted, contained "a lot of interesting thoughts". In November 1990, Yeltsin told the RSFSR Supreme Soviet that he was "intrigued by the idea of a union of the three Slavic republics" - a central point in Solzhenitsyn's program.<sup>121</sup>

The difference between conservative and liberal Russian ethnic nationalists was that liberals had no interest in entities such as a Slavic Union, or in unification with Russian communities in other republics. They were prepared to see the new Russia as simply the Russian Federation detached from the union. Nor did they share the goal of preserving Russian cultural uniqueness. On the contrary, their major aim was prompt implementation of Western-style political and economic reforms, and they saw the rest of the Soviet Union as ballast, which only hampered progressive development of the Russian state, and should be dumped as soon as possible. But liberals obviously saw that they could use conservative Russian nationalists to attack Gorbachev and the Union government.

<sup>118</sup> It included the All-Russian Society for the Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments, the Unity Association of Lovers of Russian Literature and Art, the All-Russian Culture Fund, the Russian Section of the International Foundation for Slavic Literatures and Slavic Cultures, the Fund to Restore the Church of Christ the Saviour, the Association of Russian Artists, the Public Committee to Save the Volga and some others.

<sup>119</sup> *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 23.07.91.

<sup>120</sup> Solzhenitsyn, A., *Rebuilding Russia*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1991, pp. 9-12.

<sup>121</sup> Dunlop, J.B., *Russian Reactions to Solzhenitsyn's Brochure* // *Radio Liberty*, Report on the USSR, Vol.2, No.50, December 14, 1990, pp. 4-6.



At that time real opposition to ethnic nationalists could come from only one ideology, based on the strong Russian imperial tradition, which can be identified as Russian neo-Eurasianism. As a philosophical school Eurasianism emerged in the 1920's in the left wing of the Russian postrevolutionary emigration.<sup>122</sup> Eurasianists perceived the USSR as a continuation of the empire, and regarded ethnic nationalism, including Russian, as extremely dangerous to the future integrity of the common state. As an alternative they advocated a concept of "common Eurasian nationalism".<sup>123</sup> The main theoretician of Russian neo-Eurasianism was a popular novelist A.Prokhanov.<sup>124</sup> Another prominent ideologist of Russian neo-Eurasianism was Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, now Chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party of the Russia (LDPR).<sup>125</sup> The first Neo-Eurasianist organisation, the United Council of Russia, was launched in mid-September 1989, with the objective of preserving the USSR.<sup>126</sup> Neo-Eurasianism was clearly present in the activities of the "Soyuz" (Union) faction in the USSR Supreme Soviet. The Communist Party of the Russian Federation, established in mid-1990, also supported ideas of neo-Eurasianism, though its leaders' close links to Gorbachev deprived them of political credibility.

The Kazakh elite closely watched the political debate in Russia on relations with Kazakhstan, and could not fail to be concerned at the proposals to partition it voiced by Russian ethnic nationalists. In September 1990 at a rally in the centre of Alma-Ata Solzhenitsyn's publication was vehemently condemned.<sup>127</sup> A series of articles attacking him appeared simultaneously in the Kazakhstan and Moscow press.<sup>128</sup> However, the Kazakh elite had no liking for Russian neo-Eurasianism either, since it envisaged preservation of the USSR as a single state and Moscow's firm control over the republics.

On 20 September 1989 a long-awaited plenum on nationality affairs was finally held. It adopted a CPSU platform on nationality policy.<sup>129</sup> At the plenum

<sup>122</sup> Among most prominent Eurasianists one can name geographer and economist P.N.Savitsky, philosopher and historian L.P.Karsavin, ethnologist and linguist N.S.Trubetskoy, historian G.V.Vernadsky, art researcher P.P.Suvchinskiy, religious philosophers G.V.Florovskiy and V.N.Ilin, literary researcher D.P.Svyatopolk-Mirskiy, law scientist N.N.Alekseev, economist Y.D.Sadovskiy. The group manifested itself for the first time by publication of a collection of articles "Exodus to the East", which appeared in Sofia (Bulgaria) in 1921.

<sup>123</sup> Trubetskoy, N., *Obscheevraziyskiy natsionalizm // Etnopoliticheskiy Vestnik*, No.4, 1995, pp. 218-221.

<sup>124</sup> Prokhanov, A., *Tragediya tsentralizma // Literaturnaya Rossiya*, No 1, 1990.

<sup>125</sup> The party was created on 31 March 1990 and its program spoke for "preserving the unity and the territorial integrity of the great power". It recommended to return to it the historical name of Russia. It also proclaimed that the RSFSR should become a unitary state and the union republics should join it in a "union entity... on the basis of federation or confederation (that is with lesser or larger amount of powers)". [*Liberalno-Demokraticheskaya Partiya Sovetskogo Soyuz, Dokumenty i materialy*, Moscow [No publisher], 1991, pp. 39-41].

<sup>126</sup> Members of the association included United Workers' Fronts of Moscow and Leningrad, the Union of Patriotic Organisations of the Urals and Siberia, Internationalist Fronts from Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Moldova. [*Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 14.09.89].

<sup>127</sup> *Izvestiya*, 24.09.90.

<sup>128</sup> See, for example: Nupreisov, A., *Svoya i chuzhaya bol' // Izvestiya*, 31.09.90.

<sup>129</sup> The platform called for a "renewed federation filled with real political and economic content, to ensure the satisfaction of the diverse requirements of all Soviet nations", and advocated "optimal correlation between the rights of the union republics and the USSR as a whole" by clearly defining "the jurisdiction and mutual obligations of the Union and the republics". Most important among its suggested innovations were economic self-reliance for the republics, increased autonomy for republican Communist Parties, and a new Union Treaty. [*Pravda*, 17.08.90].

Nazarbayev revealed his political objective of achieving maximum independence from Moscow. He described the Soviet Union in its present form as not a federation but a unitary state. To turn it into a real federation the republics' rights must be expanded, especially in ownership and administration of land, minerals and other resources. He advocated transferring ownership of basic industries to from Union to republican ministries, and argued strongly for granting republics the right to enter into international economic agreements. On the other hand he advocated that Moscow retain ownership of defence industries and means of communication.<sup>130</sup>

In his speech at the Second Congress of USSR People's Deputies in December 1989 Nazarbayev emphasised that "republics need complete economic independence in the framework of a federation and right of ownership of their territory, and they need guaranteed freedom in relations with the Centre, ministries and foreign partners..."<sup>131</sup> Thus Nazarbayev's initial concept as declared was a political and military union with full economic independence for the republics, including in external economic relations. In this he was not original, but simply followed the Baltic nationalist leaders, who had been the first to advance the concept of "economic sovereignty". Though at that stage Nazarbayev still supported preservation of the Soviet Union, and did not advocate full political independence for the republics, it is quite possible that he already had in mind the goal of full independence. He wrote in his memoirs: "From the beginning of 1990 I started to think that Kazakhstan would have to get out of the post-perestroika impasse independently. Already nobody believed in the power of the Centre".<sup>132</sup>

Nazarbayev saw a real chance for Kazakhstan's full independence in mid-1990, after the newly-elected RSFSR Supreme Soviet adopted a declaration of sovereignty. The declaration among other things proclaimed that the RSFSR "recognises and respects the sovereign rights of the union republics and the USSR".<sup>133</sup> According to Nazarbayev, from the "formal" point of view, the Russian declaration of sovereignty meant "inability of the USSR to exist further in its previous form".<sup>134</sup> Kazakhstan's own declaration soon followed, the Republic's Supreme Soviet adopting it on 25 October 1990. Much of it repeated provisions contained in the Russian declaration. Kazakhstan proclaimed itself a "sovereign state which voluntarily associates with other republics in a Union of Sovereign Republics, and builds relations with them on a treaty basis". It said that "citizens of the republic of all nationalities constitute the people of Kazakhstan, and they are the sole exponent of sovereignty and the source of state power in the Kazakh SSR". The declaration established the supremacy of the constitution and

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<sup>130</sup> Pravda, 21.09.89.

<sup>131</sup> Izvestiya, 15.12.89.

<sup>132</sup> Nazarbayev, N., Na poroge XXI veka, Almaty: "Oner", 1996, p. 86.

<sup>133</sup> Declaration on the State Sovereignty of the RSFSR Adopted by the First Congress of RSFSR People's Deputies, 12 June 1990 // Perestroika in the Soviet Republics, Documents on the National Questions / Ed. Ch.F.Furtado & A.Chandler, Oxford: Westview Press, 1992, p. 325.

<sup>134</sup> Nazarbayev, N., Na poroge XXI veka, Almaty: "Oner", 1996, p. 43.

Kazakhstan's laws on its territory "except for matters which it voluntarily delegates to the Union". Kazakhstan reserved the right to freely secede from the Union.<sup>135</sup>

There were, however, substantial distinctions between the Russian and Kazakh declarations, which reflected different policies with regard to the future of the USSR and the individual development of these two republics. While the Russian declaration claimed the right to have RSFSR "plenipotentiary representation in other Union republics and foreign countries", Kazakhstan's went much further, proclaiming its right "to act as an independent subject of international relations, determine foreign policy in its own interests, exchange diplomatic and consular missions, and participate in the activity of international organisations". It also claimed the right to have its own internal troops, bodies of state security and internal affairs, and a national bank, not subordinate to Moscow. Thus Kazakhstan's concept of sovereignty was much broader than Russia's.

The Kazakh declaration also differed from the Russian on the issue of ethnic relations. In several places it emphasised the special role of the Kazakh nation. Thus the preamble mentioned "responsibility for the fate of the Kazakh nation". Section 2 specified the necessity for "revival and development of the distinctive culture, traditions, and language and strengthening of the national dignity of the Kazakh nation". The Russian declaration contained no mention of the Russian nation, and used the term "citizens of the RSFSR".

Besides, the Kazakh declaration contained some specific provisions absent from the Russian one. It said, for example, that Kazakhstan "regulates migration within the republic and between the republic and other republics". It also warned of legal prosecution of any who made public appeals for violation of the republic's territorial integrity and "inciting national discord". The latter provision was clearly directed against those Russian organisations and individuals who advocated joining Russian-populated northern Kazakhstan to the RSFSR. The Kazakh declaration contained obvious nationalist overtones, despite several references to the multinational nature of Kazakhstan as a state. Implementation of all of its provisions would mean that the republic *de facto* became an independent state.

With the declaration adopted, Kazakhstan's government proceeded to consolidate the republic's sovereignty. In late October it introduced customs controls, including on trade with other republics of the USSR, to prevent export of all sorts of goods.<sup>136</sup> In January 1991 it made its first claims on the Baykonur cosmodrome. On 14 January, during his visit to Baykonur, Nazarbayev said that "the cosmodrome's scientific and technical potential will work directly towards resolving some of Kazakhstan's problems, such as space communications, space television, study of natural resources, weather monitoring". In early February he received in Alma-Ata representatives of the Defence Ministry and other ministries and departments, scientific institutions and enterprises connected with space

<sup>135</sup> Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Kazakh SSR, 25 October 1990 // *Perestroika in the Soviet Republics, Documents on the National Questions* / Ed. Ch.F.Furtado & A.Chandler, Oxford: Westview Press, 1992, pp. 485-488.

<sup>136</sup> *Izvesiya*, 29.10.90.

activities, and emphasised to them that Union ministries and departments should pay more attention to the social sphere. Leaders of space programs and the government of Kazakhstan signed a number of documents which envisaged setting up a warning system for contingencies such as earthquakes, mudslides, and other natural calamities. The space research institute of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences was to become a centre for space studies, scientists could take a more active part in the solution of ecological problems, earth studies and prospecting for natural resources from space.<sup>137</sup>

On 9 April 1991 the Kazakhstan Supreme Soviet Presidium passed a resolution transferring oil and gas deposits in Kazakhstan to the republic's jurisdiction, and instructing the Committee for Administering State Property to conclude agreements to that effect with the USSR Ministry of the Oil and Gas Industry.<sup>138</sup> The decision was taken just before the start of drilling operations in the Tengiz oilfield, an enterprise expected to be a joint venture between Kazakhstan and the US Chevron Corporation, and eventually to yield 30-35 million tons of oil a year plus natural gas.<sup>139</sup> On 25 March Nazarbayev met heads of enterprises subordinate to all-Union ministries to discuss how they fitted into Kazakhstan's economic reform program, particularly how powers should be redefined and relations changed between Moscow, Alma-Ata and the enterprises themselves.<sup>140</sup>

In early May 1991 Kazakhstan's Supreme Soviet prepared a draft citizenship law, which contemplated granting citizenship only to those who had lived in the republic for at least 10 years and had a command of the state language.<sup>141</sup> Soon after that the Kazakh authorities began repatriating Kazakhs from Mongolia, the first group of 170 arriving in July 1991.<sup>142</sup>

Besides such straightforward measures, Nazarbayev began a devious game aimed at creating a legal basis for inter-republican relations by-passing the USSR Government. He initiated a process of concluding multiple inter-republic agreements which undermined the power of the Union's centre. The first such agreement was concluded less than a fortnight after the RSFSR declared its sovereignty. On 23 June 1990 Nazarbayev invited the leaders of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan to Alma-Ata, where they signed an Agreement on Economic, Scientific-Technological and Cultural Cooperation covering the period up to 1996. Its preamble stated the principle of "state and economic sovereignty of republics", and proclaimed as a major objective "coordination of actions in attaining economic self-sufficiency of the republics, realisation of effective economic strategy and tactics with respect for mutual interests, and acceleration of social progress of the multinational population of the republics". The agreement envisaged a permanent Coordinating Council of representatives of each republic's State Planning Committee, to meet not less than

<sup>137</sup> Kazakhstan Signs Space Programme Agreement, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 13.02.91.

<sup>138</sup> Kazakh Resolution on Oil and Gas Deposits, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 15.04.91.

<sup>139</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report, No.83, 30.04.91.

<sup>140</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report No.60, 26.03.91.

<sup>141</sup> Kazakh Draft Law on Citizenship, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 09.05.91.

<sup>142</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report No.142, 29.07.91.

twice a year, in each capital in rotation, but with its secretariat permanently based in Alma-Ata. It was "to guarantee the coordination of general economic, scientific-technological, and cultural-political directions, and fulfilment of the conditions of this Agreement".<sup>143</sup>

It was typical of Nazarbayev's political style that he described the meeting as an "event to strengthen our Union, our Federation as a whole",<sup>144</sup> whereas in reality both the meeting and the agreement served the opposite purpose of involving the other Central Asian leaders in a process of fragmenting the union, skilfully capitalising on their natural anxiety about the Russian declaration of sovereignty's potential consequences for Central Asia. In a way it was a collective reply to Yeltsin, but in practice had a more far-reaching ulterior motive - to undermine the central government's power by establishing alternative mechanisms for political and economic management of inter-republican relations.

Later Nazarbayev made similar deals with other republics, all accompanied by vocal declarations that they were being concluded for the Union's sake, to lay the foundations for the new Union treaty. In a speech on 17 August 1991 Nazarbayev actually took credit for Kazakhstan's being the first to conclude agreements establishing "horizontal ties" with the other republics of Central Asia. "At that, frankly speaking, crucial point, a lot depended on the other republics understanding our aims. And we are grateful to Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia for not only supporting us, but also agreeing to conclude similar treaties with us", he said.<sup>145</sup>

On 5 October 1990 Kazakhstan and Belorussia signed an agreement on economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation. It emphasised that direct ties could become a reliable base for drafting a new Union treaty, and established a coordinating council to regulate business contacts.<sup>146</sup> In late November 1990 Kazakhstan signed an agreement with Ukraine on economic and cultural cooperation, including establishing a permanent coordinating council for business cooperation, consisting of representatives of economic and management bodies, and completing the drafting of treaties on various issues, including diplomatic and foreign relations, within two months.<sup>147</sup>

On 21 November 1990 in Moscow Yeltsin and Nazarbayev signed a Treaty between the Kazakh SSR and RSFSR, which was more comprehensive than the previous inter-republican agreements. It proclaimed policies of equality, non-interference in internal affairs, denunciation of pressure, coercion and blackmail in mutual relations, and guarantees of the rights and freedoms of Russians in Kazakhstan and Kazakhs in Russia. They also signed an economic agreement

<sup>143</sup> Agreement on Economic, Scientific-Technical and Cultural Cooperation of the Uzbek, Kazakh, Kirgiz, Tajik and Turkmen SSRs, 23 June 1990 // *Perestroika in the Soviet Republics, Documents on the National Questions* / Ed. Ch.F.Furtado & A.Chandler, Oxford: Westview Press, 1992, pp. 481-483.

<sup>144</sup> Central Asian Leaders Meeting in Alma-Ata, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, Third Series, 27.06.90.

<sup>145</sup> Nazarbayev's Speech at Document Signing Ceremony, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 20.08.91.

<sup>146</sup> Belorussia-Kazakhstan co-operation agreement, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 09.10.90.

<sup>147</sup> Ukraine-Kazakhstan Agreement Signed, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, Third Series, 01.12.90.

containing obligations on mutual supplies, identifying strategic directions for moving towards a market economy, and for cooperation in television, other means of communication, including via space, and transportation, including transcontinental. At the joint press conference after the signing, Yeltsin made an important statement designed to allay Nazarbayev's fears about future Russian policy towards Kazakhstan, and to draw him to his side in his struggle with Gorbachev. Yeltsin said that Russia had once and for all abandoned the policy of supremacy, or of putting pressure on the republics, in particular on Kazakhstan.<sup>148</sup> But later events showed that Nazarbayev had no intention of taking sides; he played for one side only, his own.

The treaty with Russia set an important precedent, and more such treaties soon followed. On 18 February 1991 Nazarbayev and President Akayev of Kyrgyzstan signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation. Nazarbayev told a news conference that it opened up "vast opportunities for the republics to develop cooperation by recognising their sovereignty".<sup>149</sup> On 20 February 1991 Nazarbayev and Kravchuk concluded a bilateral treaty between Kazakhstan and Ukraine, which provided for mutual recognition of sovereignty of the republics, respect for their territorial integrity, and equal rights for all irrespective of nationality, religion or other differences. It was again stressed that such agreements would become a real basis for drafting the new Union treaty.<sup>150</sup>

In addition to undermining the USSR government's power through bilateral agreements with other republics, Nazarbayev made similar attempts in the sphere of international relations. In 1990-1991 he toured the United States, Canada, South Korea and China, seeking to establish independent economic relations with them. But in that domain his efforts were less successful; he failed to induce any foreign state to by-pass Moscow and establish direct relations with Kazakhstan.

A major element in Nazarbayev's political tactics in that period was exploitation of the rivalry between Yeltsin and Gorbachev. This became evident at the 28th CPSU Congress in July 1990, at which Nazarbayev confirmed his stand in favour of the Union. "Our position, which the Communists and the majority of toilers in Kazakhstan share, is for a renewed strong Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and a unified CPSU", he said.<sup>151</sup> But another passage contained a warning to Gorbachev: "How can Kazakhstan be helped, if 90% of its industry is under Moscow's industrial control?... Our repeated proposals and demands concerning economic and foreign trade independence for enterprises remain a voice in the wilderness", and the speech ended with a clear overture to Yeltsin: "We are sincerely happy at the goodwill shown by the new leadership of the Russian Federation, which is also striving to strengthen horizontal inter-republic

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<sup>148</sup> Izvestiya, 22.11.90.

<sup>149</sup> Kazakhstan and Kirgizia Sign Agreement, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 20.02.91.

<sup>150</sup> Kazakhstan and Ukraine: Leaders Conclude Treaty and Criticize Yeltsin, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 22.02.91.

<sup>151</sup> Pravda, 06.07.90.

ties. We believe that agreements of this sort will create the foundation for a new Union Treaty".<sup>152</sup>

Thus Nazarbayev used the Yeltsin factor to put pressure on the USSR government, to demand more concessions in the matter of putting Kazakhstan's economy under Alma-Ata's jurisdiction. If these demands were not met, Kazakhstan would establish direct economic ties with the RSFSR. Such ties were in fact established when Nazarbayev saw that his warning had fallen on deaf ears. From November 1990 Nazarbayev steadily moved towards a coalition with Yeltsin against Gorbachev. The peak of this was reached in January 1991.

Early in 1991 Gorbachev, feeling political power slipping from his hands, took a series of steps to reverse the situation, in what the media later called the "conservative offensive". The use of military force in Vilnius on 12 January sent an unpleasant message to national leaders in other republics. On 14 January, after returning from his tour of the Baltic states, Yeltsin threatened Gorbachev with the possibility of a comprehensive quadripartite treaty between Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia and Kazakhstan without waiting for the Union treaty.<sup>153</sup> On 16 January Gorbachev made a countermove, decreeing the holding of a referendum on the future of the USSR on 17 March. Gorbachev calculated correctly that most of the Soviet population would support maintaining the Union's integrity, and this would legitimise his efforts to keep it intact. This prospect was fraught with obvious dangers for the republican national elites, whose long-awaited goal of independence could become unattainable.

This worried Nazarbayev. On 4 February 1991 he participated in a separate meeting with the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia, held behind Gorbachev's back. They discussed accelerating conclusion of the new Union treaty and signed an agreement on direct relations, bypassing the central government. As later revealed by Shushkevich, former Chairman of the Belorussian Supreme Soviet, it was in February that they drafted the treaty which became the basis of the Belovezhskaya agreement.<sup>154</sup> Commenting on the results of the meeting, Nazarbayev said "the central government itself directed us towards developing horizontal links; we concluded an economic treaty, and we have a political declaration between these republics". Nazarbayev explained the meeting by the need to create a common front of the republics against the USSR government. "...When it is a question of preserving, so to speak, of winning, or, perhaps winning back, the declaration adopted by the republics' Supreme Soviets on the sovereignty of the republics, we have to fight together".<sup>155</sup> Thus Nazarbayev's position was no different from that of the other three republican leaders, who

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<sup>152</sup> Pravda, 06.07.90.

<sup>153</sup> Izvestiya, 15.01.91.

<sup>154</sup> Gorbachev, M., *Zhizn' i reformy*, Kniga 2, Moscow: "Novosti", 1995, p. 516

<sup>155</sup> Kazakh President Answers Television Viewers' Questions, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 05.03.91.

would later initiate the Belovezhskaya Pushcha accords which dissolved the Soviet Union.

On 11 February 1991, at an extraordinary session of Kazakhstan's Supreme Soviet, Nazarbayev strongly advocated speeding up negotiation of the new Union treaty, on the grounds that the "exacerbated political situation" in the USSR made it impossible to wait until all the republics had determined their attitude to it. The Supreme Soviet therefore passed a resolution that: "A dialogue must be started urgently with those who advocate preservation of the country's unity, leaving the remaining republics the right to join it whenever they have made their final choice".<sup>156</sup> Nazarbayev's formula was not as simple as it appeared. He wanted to keep Gorbachev involved as deeply as possible in the new treaty negotiations, in order to prevent his going over completely to the side of the hardliners in the Soviet leadership, who advocated introducing a Union-wide state of emergency and crushing separatist tendencies by force.

The last part of Nazarbayev's formula cited above actually facilitated the Baltic republics' quest for independence. While formally speaking for preserving the USSR's integrity, he in fact proposed permitting all those who did not want to be part of the new Union to opt out of the negotiating process. With all the republics and the Kremlin already considering the existing union inadequate, this call was tantamount to allowing secession. If the USSR government had done as he suggested, it would have legitimised those republics' independence, and facilitated further moves in the same direction by Kazakhstan. Thus Nazarbayev was actually furthering the USSR's disintegration, while verbally stating his allegiance to its preservation.

Soon, however, Nazarbayev made a sudden turn, from opposing Gorbachev to defending him against Yeltsin. This was prompted by Yeltsin's speech on Russian TV on 19 February 1991, in which he demanded Gorbachev resign and hand over all political power to the Federation Council. On the next day, at a joint press conference with Ukrainian leader Kravchuk in Alma-Ata, Nazarbayev described Yeltsin's proposition as "simply unacceptable". "...There will not be a leader of the state, on the whole there will be no centre. What he is proposing is that all republics again become part of the Great Russian Empire. This is also unacceptable for the republics... what he said was not constructive and this proposal cannot be supported in Kazakhstan".<sup>157</sup>

Nazarbayev definitely feared Yeltsin, and wanted to retain Gorbachev as a counterbalance to him. When asked in an interview which of the two he preferred, Nazarbayev said: "An important quality in every politician is predictability of his actions. I believe that M.S.Gorbachev has this quality. Therefore I am very much afraid of drastic changes in the top echelon of power, which today could lead to

<sup>156</sup> Kazakh President Urges Signing of Union Treaty: Supreme Soviet Appeal, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 13.02.91.

<sup>157</sup> Kazakhstan and Ukraine: Leaders Conclude Treaty and Criticize Yeltsin, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 22.02.91.



loss of even the rather small democratic gains that perestroika has given us".<sup>158</sup> Nazarbayev's implied criticism of Yeltsin as unpredictable showed that he was unsure what Yeltsin would do once all restraints on his power were removed. In this Nazarbayev took account of Yeltsin's unconcealed fascination with Solzhenitsyn's concept of rearranging Russia, including annexing much or all of Kazakhstan to the Russian state.

Nazarbayev's support for Gorbachev was only a tactical move, and soon he was again opposing him. Kazakhstan was the only republic in the USSR to change the wording of the referendum question on its future. In the question: "Do you consider it necessary to preserve the USSR as a union of equal sovereign republics?" the word "republics" was replaced by "states".<sup>159</sup> According to Nazarbayev, this change was made to bring it into line with the formulation contained in Kazakhstan's declaration of sovereignty.<sup>160</sup> The tactic he applied was again very ingenious. He could not refuse to hold the referendum, as did some other republics, because a number of the Russian-populated regions would hold it anyway, and this could lead to a de facto split of Kazakhstan. But the change in the wording could achieve the same goal, by permitting him to claim in future negotiations with Moscow that the voters had supported his concept of a much looser Union.

Gorbachev obviously understood what lay behind Nazarbayev's move and tried to apply pressure. Nazarbayev says that he received daily telephone calls from Gorbachev or his aides, demanding that the union question be put first.<sup>161</sup> And Nazarbayev managed to get away with his manoeuvre, although the changing of the wording caused resentment in some Russian-populated areas, for example Ust-Kamenogorsk and Uralsk, where the local authorities insisted that the USSR Supreme Soviet's wording be retained.<sup>162</sup> But in the overwhelming majority of Kazakhstan's provinces it was Nazarbayev's question that was put to the vote.

The results of the referendum in Kazakhstan were significant. 88.2% of the electorate voted, and 94.1% of them voted "Yes", the fourth highest among the Union republics. The USSR average was 80% voting and 76.4% of those voting "Yes", in Russia 75.4% and 71.3% respectively.<sup>163</sup> Despite the controversy surrounding Kazakhstan's position on the referendum, Nazarbayev artfully used it to his own benefit. Firstly, over Moscow's objections he pushed through wording that suited him, and left him a wide field for manoeuvre vis-a-vis Gorbachev. Secondly, he did so without antagonising Gorbachev to the point of enmity.

The referendum results strengthened Gorbachev's position vis-a-vis the national elites and allowed him to press for preservation of the Union. On 23 April

<sup>158</sup> Komsomolskaya pravda, 13.04.91

<sup>159</sup> Kazakhstan Changes Wording of Referendum Question, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 14.03.91.

<sup>160</sup> Kazakh President Answers Television Viewers' Questions, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 05.03.91.

<sup>161</sup> Komsomolskaya pravda, 13.04.91.

<sup>162</sup> Some Kazakh Towns Disagree with Wording of the Referendum, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 16.03.91.

<sup>163</sup> Izvestiya, 27.03.91.

1991 Gorbachev met the leaders of the nine republics that had participated in the referendum. The meeting adopted a joint statement which *inter alia* provided for speedy conclusion of a new Union Treaty "taking into account the results of the all-Union referendum". Gorbachev made substantial concessions, agreeing to recognise Union Republics as "sovereign states", promising "fundamental enhancement" of their powers, and committing himself to early elections after signing a new Union Treaty.<sup>164</sup> During negotiations for the new draft Union Treaty Gorbachev tried to enlist Nazarbayev as an ally against Yeltsin. He clearly failed to grasp the essence of Nazarbayev's policy, and fell for his multiple declarations in favour of the new Union Treaty.

On 28 May Gorbachev went to Kazakhstan, on a public relations exercise designed to boost his political standing in the final stages of negotiation of the new Union treaty. Nazarbayev used Gorbachev's visit to maximum benefit for himself. He reiterated Kazakhstan's commitment to the "renewed Union", and extracted important new concessions from the USSR government. He lobbied Gorbachev to transfer industrial enterprises located in Kazakhstan but run by USSR ministries to the republic's jurisdiction. At a meeting with Gorbachev and members of Kazakhstan's political and industrial establishment on 30 May 1991, Nazarbayev voiced assurances that when the enterprises were transferred, the republic's leadership "would display maximum balance and circumspection to maintain the coordination and management of production in the country as a whole".<sup>165</sup> To please Nazarbayev, Gorbachev gave way.

On 14-15 June 1991, at a meeting between Nazarbayev and M.Shadov, USSR Minister of the Coal Industry, O.Soskovets, USSR Minister of Metallurgy and V.Shimko, USSR Minister of Radio Industry, it was agreed to transfer these enterprises to Kazakhstan's jurisdiction.<sup>166</sup> This was an important victory for Nazarbayev. Neither he nor anybody else at that time could predict that the USSR would disintegrate before the end of the year, and assuming control of the major industrial enterprises in Kazakhstan was a breakthrough towards full economic sovereignty.

The ceremony for signing the Union Treaty was set for 20 August, and the first republics to do so would be Russia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.<sup>167</sup> But before it, on 16-17 August, an important meeting between Yeltsin and Nazarbayev took place in Alma-Ata. Formally it was devoted to exchanging instruments of ratification of the bilateral treaty signed a year before, but its political purpose was to project both republics' self-proclaimed image as sovereign states on the eve of signing the new Union treaty. But Nazarbayev used the occasion to extract major concessions from Yeltsin on the territorial issue. Besides signing a protocol on ratification, Yeltsin and Nazarbayev adopted a joint declaration "On Guarantees of

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<sup>164</sup> *Izvestiya*, 24.04.91.

<sup>165</sup> Nazarbayev Speaks to Alma-Ata Activists, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 03.06.91

<sup>166</sup> Communique on Meeting between Nazarbayev and USSR Ministers, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 11.07.91.

<sup>167</sup> *Izvestiya*, 03.08.91.

Stability of the Union of Sovereign States". It said that "preservation of the territorial integrity of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation is the most important guarantee for preventing disintegration of the country and its component states". The declaration especially emphasised that in making the new Union, Russia was acting as a founding state "together with republics within the RSFSR".<sup>168</sup>

Nazarbayev chose the right moment for extracting unequivocal obligations towards Kazakhstan's territorial integrity. At that moment Yeltsin himself was faced with growing separatism inside the RSFSR. Following its declaration of sovereignty, autonomous entities within it were one after another proclaiming their sovereignty too, encouraged by Gorbachev, who was trying to undermine Yeltsin's grip on power within the RSFSR and play the autonomous republics against Yeltsin, just as Yeltsin had played the Union republics against him. Some Russian autonomies had even suggested signing the Union treaty independently from Russia, thereby effectively assigning themselves the status of Union republics, and Yeltsin wanted to prevent this by all possible means. In Yeltsin's words, Nazarbayev "firmly upheld" the position that neither Tatarstan, nor any other Autonomous Republic, should be a party to the Union treaty.<sup>169</sup>

For the first time Yeltsin publicly condemned Russian separatism in Kazakhstan, saying that revival of the Cossack movement "must not be allowed to grow into some sort of territorial claims", and that "There can be no question of our tolerating the seizing of any territory of Kazakhstan in favour of Russia".<sup>170</sup> Nazarbayev also drew Yeltsin into signing a declaration "On Common Economic Space", which invited all republics of the Soviet Union to meet to discuss formation of a "common market space", and principles of creation of an "inter-republican economic committee".<sup>171</sup> The declaration represented Nazarbayev's line of establishing maximum direct ties between republics, by-passing the Union government, and committed the RSFSR leadership to further actions to undermine the integrity of the Union after the signing of the new Union treaty, even though Yeltsin was still committed to preservation of the Union, in a form less burdensome for Russia. The new union treaty obviously suited him. But the proposed declaration showed that it did not suit Nazarbayev.

On 19 August 1991 the USSR's gradual political evolution was interrupted by an abortive coup d'etat initiated by Gorbachev's associates who opposed the new Union Treaty, and wanted to preserve the USSR in its previous form as a strong federation. The coup's failure led to the central government's collapse, and

<sup>168</sup> O garantiyakh stabil'nosti Soyuzu Suverennikh Gosudarstv (sovmestnoe zayavlenie Prezidenta Kazakhstana i Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii) 17 avgusta 1991 // Kazakhstansko-Rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, p. 81.

<sup>169</sup> Yeltsin on Joint Documents to Be Signed with Kazakhstan, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 20.08.91; Nazarbayev's Speech at Document Signing Ceremony, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 20.08.91.

<sup>170</sup> Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 21.08.91.

<sup>171</sup> O edinom ekonomicheskom prostranstve (sovmestnoe zayavlenie Prezidenta Kazakhstana i Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii), 17 avgusta 1991 // Kazakhstansko-Rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, p. 80.

Nazarbayev was among those republican leaders who saw in this a good chance to opt for full independence. Gorbachev had lost real power, and could do little to stop them. On 24 August the Ukrainian and on 25 August the Belorussian Supreme Soviets declared independence. Nazarbayev refrained from doing so, but at the USSR Supreme Soviet session on 26 August 1991 stated that "the renewed Union can no longer be a federation" and a new "confederative treaty" should be concluded, adding that the new Union should have neither Union government nor Union parliament. He also said that the treaty must be signed not only by Union Republics, but also by Autonomous Republics, which "have declared, and will want to declare themselves sovereign", advocated giving those that decided to leave the Union the opportunity to do so, and called "for immediate solution to the question of giving full freedom to the Baltic republics, Moldavia and Georgia, and all who expressed their aspiration for independence and autonomy".<sup>172</sup>

This was a program for dismantling the Union, which at that moment contradicted the positions of both Gorbachev and Yeltsin. On the previous day Yeltsin had stated that the new Union must be a federation, and Gorbachev proposed at the session to sign the Union treaty and create central bodies to administer the Union until a new Constitution took effect.<sup>173</sup> Moreover, Nazarbayev had clearly backtracked on his promise to Yeltsin, made only nine days before, not to support independence for Autonomous Republics, clearly aiming to undercut the unprecedented power Yeltsin had acquired after the coup, and damp down his possible imperial ambitions.

Not surprisingly, the Russian government statement opposing uncontrolled disintegration of the Union state was not well received by Nazarbayev. The statement was published on 27 August in *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, signed by Yeltsin's press secretary Voshchanov, and implied territorial claims to Kazakhstan.<sup>174</sup> On 29 August Nazarbayev sent a telegram to Yeltsin, expressing concern that Russia had not yet clearly repudiated territorial claims on Kazakhstan's borders, and saying that public protest, gathering force in Kazakhstan, could have unforeseeable consequences. He requested dispatch of an official representative of the RSFSR to Alma-Ata to sign an "appropriate communique".<sup>175</sup> On the same day Dzhaniyev, a USSR Supreme Soviet deputy from Kazakhstan, also criticised the statement.<sup>176</sup> A Russian delegation headed by Vice-President Rutskoy arrived in Alma-Ata on 29 August, and was met by angry demonstrators from the Nevada-Semipalatinsk

<sup>172</sup> Speech by Nazarbayev, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 26.08.91.

<sup>173</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report, No.161, 26.08.91; *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 27.08.91.

<sup>174</sup> The statement said: "In the past few days a number of union republics have proclaimed state independence and announced their secession from the USSR... The Russian Federation does not question the constitutional right of every state and people to self-determination. However, there is a problem of borders, a problem that can and may remain unsettled only given the existence of relations of union, codified in an appropriate treaty. If these relations are broken off, the RSFSR reserves the right to raise the question of reviewing its borders. This applies to all adjacent republics with the exception of the three Baltic republics (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia), whose state independence Russia has already recognised..." [*Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 27.08.1991].

<sup>175</sup> Nazarbayev Warns of the Dangers of Border Claims, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 31.08.91.

<sup>176</sup> Kazakh Deputy Asks for Intercession over Borders with RSFSR, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 31.08.91.

movement.<sup>177</sup> Despite this cold reception, the negotiations between Rutskoy and Nazarbayev were quite fruitful. They resulted in a joint communique, which provided for joint measures “to prevent uncontrolled disintegration of the Union state”, confirmed mutual obligations “on issues of human rights and territorial integrity of the sides”, and also contained a provision declaring “unlawful” actions by “public associations and movements, directed at violating inter-ethnic accord”. These were the obligations Nazarbayev had wanted Russia to confirm.

On the other hand Nazarbayev had to agree to certain demands made by the Russian delegation. One provision of the communique stipulated that during the transitional period “temporary inter-governmental structures of administration” must be established, while another called for speedy formation of a “system of collective security”, stipulated that decisions on military and strategic questions, space research and communications be taken only on the basis of “inter-governmental consultations and coordination”, and provided for units of the USSR armed forces stationed in republics to have “dual subordination” to prevent their use for unconstitutional purposes. Another important undertaking was that both sides confirmed their acceptance of the former USSR’s international obligations. This was to put Kazakhstan’s future actions in international relations into a legal framework, which as later events showed played a very essential role.<sup>178</sup>

Thus Yeltsin’s political demarche played its part. The joint statement by the President of the USSR and leaders of 10 Union Republics, prepared on the eve of an extraordinary Congress of People’s Deputies (2-5 September 1991), repeated the major provisions of the Russian-Kazakh declaration. Announced at the Congress by Nazarbayev, the statement provided for: concluding a collective security treaty for the purposes of maintaining joint armed forces and a single military-strategic space; making a declaration guaranteeing citizens’ rights and freedoms; conducting basic reforms in the army, KGB, Ministry of Interior, and USSR Procurator’s Office; and taking the republics’ sovereignty into account. The republics undertook to observe the USSR’s international obligations, including in arms control and foreign economic relations.

At the same time the statement reflected a total lack of prospects for the Union state. It said that all republics which so wished so could “prepare and sign” a Union Treaty, and each republic could “independently determine the form of its participation in the Union”. In practice this was tantamount to Gorbachev’s consent to dissolution of the USSR, because it allowed republics either not to join at all or to join but undertake only insignificant obligations. Moreover, the statement effectively abolished the central Union government, proposing to replace it with an Inter-Republican Economic Committee on a parity principle to coordinate only economic management. The Congress itself was to disband and be

<sup>177</sup> *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 31.08.91.

<sup>178</sup> *Komnyunike ob itogakh peregovorov mezhdru delegatsiyami Kazakhskoy Sovetskoy Sotsialisticheskoy Respubliki i Rossiyskoy Sovetskoy Federativnoy Sotsialisticheskoy Respubliki*, 30 avgusta 1991 goda // *Kazakhstansko-Rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 82-83.

replaced by a State Council, comprising Gorbachev and the Republics' Presidents as the supreme authority in the reformed USSR. Nazarbayev also inserted his proposal for an inter-republican economic treaty, to be joined by all republics, whatever their proclaimed status. The statement also asked the Congress to support the republics for membership of the UN and recognition as subjects of international law.<sup>179</sup> Thus the program contained in the statement was one of gradual abolition of the Union state, and its replacement by a sort of international organisation with functions resembling those of a combined NATO and European Union.

After the Congress Nazarbayev continued his policy of consolidating Kazakhstan's sovereignty. On 13 September 1991 he issued a decree on conscription for military service giving Kazakhstan's military Commissariat the status of a republican body, thus putting it under the control of Kazakhstan's leadership, and also providing that from autumn 1991 Kazakhstan's Interior Ministry forces would be manned "by citizens called up for actual military service from the territory of the republic". This was to guarantee that Moscow could not use them in any internal conflict in Kazakhstan without his consent. The decree also prohibited sending conscripts to military construction detachments and Interior Forces units outside Kazakhstan.<sup>180</sup> In October Nazarbayev explained that the Interior Forces would constitute the backbone of the future National Guard, to be "an important link in strengthening the republic's security", a necessity caused "by the tragic events of last August".<sup>181</sup> Thus Nazarbayev needed a National Guard to counter any possible new acts of force initiated by Moscow.

At the beginning of September Nazarbayev took a number of decisions to assume full control of the economy. He issued decrees transferring Union-subordinated enterprises and organisations in Kazakhstan to the republic's jurisdiction, providing for independent foreign trade, and creating Kazakhstan's own reserves of precious metals and diamonds.<sup>182</sup> Supreme Soviet Chairman Asanbayev said in an interview that it would be wrong for the "centre" to control all gold and hard currency reserves, that central reserves should be created from contributions by the Union's member-states, and not consist of all the gold extracted in the republics, and added that the republics themselves must control the credit resources formed on their territory.<sup>183</sup> On instructions from Nazarbayev Kazakhstan set up customs posts on the border with Russia's Chelyabinsk province, to stem the outflow of food and consumer goods.<sup>184</sup>

<sup>179</sup> Gorbachev, M., *Zhizn' i reformy*, Kniga 2, Moscow: "Novosti", 1995, pp. 585-586.

<sup>180</sup> Nazarbayev Decree on Military Service: No Conscription Outside Republic, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 18.09.91; Nazarbayev Decree on Call-up in Kazakhstan, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 27.09.91.

<sup>181</sup> *Krasnaya zvezda*, 12.10.91.

<sup>182</sup> *Izvestiya*, 02.09.91.

<sup>183</sup> Kazakh Supreme Soviet Chairman Says Economic Treaty Must Be Signed, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 10.10.91.

<sup>184</sup> Kazakhstan Sets up Customs Posts to Stem Food Drain to Chelyabinsk Oblast, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 03.10.91.

In an interview with *Hokkaido Shimbun*, published by *Kazakhstanskaya pravda* on 2 October 1991, Nazarbayev explained that he saw the new union "as a community of sovereign states united in resolving similar economic, political, social and other problems... with each republic deciding for itself how it is to join and the conditions for its membership of the new organisation". Use of such terms as "community" and "association" was not accidental. They meant that by then Nazarbayev had made a firm choice for dissolution of the single Union state, and its replacement by an organisation similar to the European Community. Nazarbayev also indicated that relations between Kazakhstan and Russia would be based on the treaty signed between them, thus denying central government any future role in regulating them.<sup>185</sup>

In October Nazarbayev made an attempt to put the Soviet military infrastructure in Kazakhstan under his control. In a speech on Republic Day, he revealed his plan "to build our relations with the troops stationed on the territory of Kazakhstan on a very strict legal basis, with the requirement that they be jointly subordinate to the republic's President".<sup>186</sup> To this end he issued a decree on 25 October establishing the State Defence Committee of Kazakhstan, and specifying that it was to guarantee the independence, territorial integrity, defence and other vitally important interests of Kazakhstan.<sup>187</sup> Lieutenant-General S. Nurmagambetov, appointed as its Chairman, said in an interview that a sovereign state such as Kazakhstan must have all the attributes of statehood, including those concerned with defence, and that Kazakhstan was not about to set up its own armed forces, but that the State Defence Committee would cover all the republic's military infrastructure and take all forces in Kazakhstan under its control.<sup>188</sup>

At a meeting with voters in mid-November 1991 Nazarbayev said that Civil Defence troops and military commissariats, with all their property and weapons, would come under the control of the republic's State Defence Committee. A "certain contingent of troops" subordinate to the central authorities in Moscow would remain in Kazakhstan, but their number would be determined by a special treaty with the Union centre.<sup>189</sup>

Also in November Kazakhstan declared its intention to take control of Baykonur cosmodrome. This was announced on 7 November by a spokesman for the Kazakhstan Space Research Agency, who said that Baykonur would become a joint-stock company called International Spaceport, which would compete with US, European and Chinese aerospace firms to launch commercial payloads with Soviet rockets.<sup>190</sup>

On 30 September, on Nazarbayev's initiative, a conference of leaders of twelve union republics had been held in Alma-Ata. Formally it was devoted to

<sup>185</sup> Nazarbayev on the Future of Kazakhstan, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 18.10.91.

<sup>186</sup> Krasnaya zvezda, 12.10.91.

<sup>187</sup> Kazakhstan Sets up State Defence Committee, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 30.10.91.

<sup>188</sup> Kazakhstan to Set up National Guard, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 22.11.91.

<sup>189</sup> Nazarbayev: Internal Troops to Form Future Kazakh National Guard, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, 04.12.91.

<sup>190</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report No.212, 07.11.91.

preparing the text of an economic treaty, but Nazarbayev later gave a more explicit explanation of his decision to arrange it. He said that members of the State Council had begun to display dissatisfaction that Gorbachev presided at the Council's meetings, and "proposals began to be heard to assemble without the President of the USSR and, if required, to elect a Chairman of the State Council". This was not, of course, the result of mere dislike of Gorbachev. His presiding over the meetings was a manifestation, though a token one, that a single Union state still existed. Nazarbayev decided to further undermine the authority of the Union centre by inviting all State Council members except Gorbachev to meet in Alma-Ata,<sup>191</sup> so as to show that Gorbachev's authority was null and void.

The Alma-Ata conference coincided with a major shift in the RSFSR leadership's position on the Union treaty. A group of influential politicians and advisers in Yeltsin's entourage, aware of what was happening in other republics, concluded that preservation of the Union was no longer possible. They prepared a confidential report "Russia's Strategy in the Transitional Period", and presented it to Yeltsin while he was on vacation in Sochi. The report indicated that the other republics' interest in the union treaty was purely tactical, because during the period of transition they needed to preserve the existing system of flows of material and financial resources, and this was advantageous to them but disadvantageous to Russia, because "Having established control over the property on their territories, they are trying through Union bodies to redistribute Russian property and resources for their benefit". This would, the report alleged, enable the republics to reconstruct their economies at Russia's expense, while Russia's own chances for economic revival would decrease. After that the republics could easily secede, leaving Russia in the cold. The report recommended that Russia "refrain from entering into long-term, firm and comprehensive economic unions", "be uninterested in creation of permanent super-republican bodies of economic administration", "categorically object to introduction of tax payments to the Union budget", and "have its own customs service".<sup>192</sup>

This was why many influential Russian politicians fiercely objected to the conclusion of the economic treaty in Alma-Ata. Though the Russian delegation there pledged to sign the treaty not later than 15 October 1991<sup>193</sup>, their promise was strongly criticised by several members of the Russian government. According to press reports the RSFSR government in effect disavowed Deputy Premier E. Saburov's signature, and he and State Secretary Burbulis flew to Sochi to see Yeltsin, who would have the final say on the matter.<sup>194</sup> Gorbachev, on the other hand, was keen to preserve any super-republican structures which allowed him to maintain the semblance of a Union state. He was quick to intervene in the dispute, and announced that the State Council would be convened on 11 October to discuss

<sup>191</sup> Nazarbayev on the CIS, Kazakhstan, the Future, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 06.05.92.

<sup>192</sup> Gorbachev, M., *Zhizn' i reformy*, Kniga 2, Moscow: "Novosti", 1995, pp. 589-590.

<sup>193</sup> Three republics, Kazakhstan, Belorussia and Uzbekistan signed the treaty immediately. Five others, Russia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Tadjikistan and Turkmenistan promised to do so before 15 October 1991. [Izvestiya, 02.10.91].

<sup>194</sup> See: RFE/RL Daily Report No.190, 07.10.91; No.191, 08.10.91; No.192, 09.10.91; No.193, 10.10.91.



conclusion of a Union Treaty and creation of an economic community in the USSR. This was meant to put pressure on Yeltsin to comply with the economic treaty signed in Alma-Ata.<sup>195</sup> At the State Council meeting Yeltsin reluctantly agreed to sign the economic treaty, provided that all 17 supplementary documents envisaged by it were ready, and that financing of economic bodies not provided for in the treaty was stopped.<sup>196</sup>

The treaty was finally signed on 18 October. But it soon became clear that this was only a political manoeuvre on Yeltsin's part, and that he had no intention of observing the treaty. This fully revealed itself on 28 October, when in a speech to the Russian Congress of People's Deputies Yeltsin proposed radical economic reform, including price liberalisation, privatisation, land reform, tightening of credit policy, and possible introduction of a new currency.<sup>197</sup> These proposals were made without consulting the other republics, and without regard to Russia's obligations under the economic treaty.

Now it was mainly Yeltsin's position that deadlocked the negotiations for a new Union Treaty. Very little progress was achieved at the State Council meetings on 4 and 14 November with Yeltsin insisting that the term "Union State" be replaced by "Union of States". At the State Council meeting on 25 November Yeltsin refused to initial the draft Union Treaty until its examination by the Russian parliament. This was a delaying tactic. Gorbachev still thought the treaty could be signed in late December, and scheduled a meeting with Yeltsin, Nazarbayev, Kravchuk and Shushkevich for 9 December, to find a way out of the deadlock. But everybody else was waiting for the results of the referendum in Ukraine.

On 1 December Ukrainians voted overwhelmingly for independence. This opened the way to implement the plan to dissolve the USSR. Yeltsin telephoned Nazarbayev to say that he would go to Belorussia to consult with Kravchuk and Shushkevich on presenting a joint position on the Union treaty to Gorbachev. Yeltsin did not invite Nazarbayev to the meeting. However, when Nazarbayev arrived at Moscow airport late on 8 December, he was met by Yeltsin's representative. He connected Nazarbayev by telephone to Yeltsin, who invited him to Belorussia to sign "important documents" already agreed by the three leaders. Nazarbayev, clearly offended by such treatment, refused, saying he was not prepared to sign important documents without "consultations and advice".<sup>198</sup> At a press conference the next day he said: "Such questions should be resolved in a coordinated way, not without consulting other republics. They did not even know about them. I can only regret that it happened this way...".<sup>199</sup> Gorbachev asserted in his memoirs that Nazarbayev consulted him before deciding not to go.<sup>200</sup>

The decisions taken by the leaders of the three Slavic republics at Belovezhskaya Pushcha proclaimed formation of a new political entity - the

<sup>195</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report, 09.10.91.

<sup>196</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report No.195, 14.10.91.

<sup>197</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report No.206, 29.10.91

<sup>198</sup> Valovoy, D., *Kremlevskiy tupik i Nazarbayev*, Moscow: "Molodaya Gvardiya", 1993, pp. 147-148.

<sup>199</sup> *Izvestiya*, 10.12.91.

<sup>200</sup> Gorbachev, M., *Zhizn' i reformy*, Kniga 2, Moscow: "Novosti", 1995, pp. 598-599.

Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and declared that the USSR "as a subject of international law and geopolitical reality ceases its existence".<sup>201</sup> The CIS was formed not as a state, nor even a confederation, but as an international organisation. It provided no post of President of the Commonwealth, and that meant the end of Gorbachev's political career.

The fact that Nazarbayev took offence at the lack of consultation with him did not mean that he objected to the substance of the Belovezhskaya accords. As soon as the Supreme Soviets of Belorussia, Ukraine and Russia ratified the Minsk agreement, Kazakhstan's Supreme Soviet proclaimed independence on 16 December, a very symbolic date, as it was the fifth anniversary of the Alma-Ata riots. Nazarbayev also played a central role in organising on 21 December in Alma-Ata a conference of eleven Union Republics, which endorsed the Belovezhskaya accords and signed a number of documents effectively abolishing the common union state. On 25 December 1991 Gorbachev relinquished the Presidency. The Soviet Union ceased to exist, and Kazakhstan emerged as a new independent state.

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<sup>201</sup> Soglashenie o sozdanii Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, p. 319.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE PROBLEM OF ETHNIC RUSSIANS IN KAZAKHSTAN

Russian official policy towards Kazakhstan developed in the framework of Moscow's broader strategy in relation to the post-Soviet states. It was a long and painful process of adjustment of abstract ideological perceptions, dogmas and prejudices to the harsh political realities of the Eurasian continent. The most difficult problem for Russian diplomacy was the status of Russian minorities in other CIS states. After the dissolution of the USSR national leaders in some of the republics introduced policies which discriminated against ethnic Russians. The anti-Yeltsin opposition artfully capitalised on events, holding him responsible for the collapse of the USSR, which, they alleged, not only failed to bring about a Russian national revival but led to humiliation and suffering of 25 million ethnic Russians who suddenly found themselves outside the borders of their national homeland. The government had to act. In late February 1992 Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev stated in an interview that while Russia respected the sovereignty of the CIS states, it would strictly defend its own interests, including "the protection of the Russian and Russian-speaking population in other CIS states".<sup>1</sup>

Kazakhstan had one of the largest Russian minorities in the post-Soviet space, and its treatment by the authorities, naturally, became one of primary concern for the Russian leadership. The situation there was not as bad as in some other post-Soviet states (Lithuania, Estonia, Moldova, Tajikistan), but nevertheless gave grounds for anxiety. In the very first months after independence Russia tried to draw Kazakhstan into an agreement specifying obligations with regard to its Russian minority. At a meeting in Uralsk on 23 March 1992, the Russian and Kazakh delegations agreed to develop a comprehensive bilateral treaty, which among other things, would address the problem of rights and freedoms of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan.

This treaty, "On Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance", was signed on 25 May 1992 in Moscow by Yeltsin and Nazarbayev.<sup>2</sup> It seemed to reaffirm the basic principle on which Yeltsin and Nazarbayev had made their alliance. Moscow recognised the inviolability of Kazakhstan's borders, and Almaty undertook to observe the rights of ethnic Russians. It was particularly important for Kazakhstan that its territorial integrity was recognised not within the framework of the USSR or CIS as in previous Russian-Kazakh agreements, but unconditionally.

The largest set of provisions in the treaty addressed some of Moscow's concerns with regard to ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan. Article 11 stipulated that

<sup>1</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report No.40, 27.02.92.

<sup>2</sup> Dogovor o druzhbe, sotrudnichestve i vzaimnoy pomoshchi mezhdru Respublikoy Kazakhstan i Rossiyskoy Federatsiey // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya 1991 -1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 87-98.

the parties would guarantee equal rights and freedoms to citizens and non-citizens, regardless of their ethnic origin. Citizens of Russia and Kazakhstan living in each other's territory were guaranteed "civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights and freedoms in accordance with commonly recognised international norms on human rights, taking account of the Parties' legislation as well". It also gave persons living in Russia or Kazakhstan the right to chose citizenship of the other country.

Article 12 said that the parties could "defend the rights of their citizens, living on the territory of the other Party, give them protection and support" in accordance with norms of international law. The problem here was that the majority of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan were not *de jure* Russian citizens, and were not formally covered by this provision. Their rights were mentioned in Article 14, which had broader application. It stipulated that the contracting parties would "ensure the development and protection of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious uniqueness of national minorities on its territory and create conditions for encouraging this uniqueness". The following guarantees were envisaged for national minorities:

1. The right to "freely express, maintain and develop their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious uniqueness, support and develop their culture in all its aspects, without being subjected to any attempts of assimilation against their will".
2. The right to "fully and effectively exercise their human rights and basic freedoms and use them without any discrimination and under conditions of full equality before the law".
3. The right "for participation in state affairs, effective and adequate to their needs, related to protection and encouragement of uniqueness of such minorities".

Article 27 stipulated that the parties "would encourage comprehensive development of languages and cultures of all nationalities" including teaching of national languages in schools. This provision was meant to ensure that the Russian language maintained a high profile in Kazakhstan. In Article 28 both countries undertook "to guarantee the regime of free activity of mass media within the framework of their legislation". Russia insisted on this provision, obviously in an attempt to secure the right for Russian organisations in Kazakhstan to express their views without hindrance.

Article 10 also said that the parties would "prohibit and suppress in accordance with their legislation" separatist organisations and those inflaming inter-ethnic tensions. Thus Russia virtually conceded to the Kazakh authorities the right to suppress the various Russian organisations and individual activists who were demanding incorporation of parts of Kazakhstan into Russia. Secondly, Russia implicitly undertook to ban similar activities in its own territory. This was compensated by the pledge in Article 15 that the parties would prevent and suppress persons or groups inciting violence against people of other nationalities. Russia insisted on this provision because of tragic experiences in some other post-Soviet states, where Russian minorities had become victims of violence by radical nationalist groups. There were several such organisations in Kazakhstan.

But in general the balance of the treaty was more favourable to the Kazakh side. The references to national legislation substantially undermined all the provisions guaranteeing the rights of the Russian minority, because the Kazakh authorities could Enact such laws as they saw fit. The only place where reference to national legislation benefited Russia was Article 10, which allowed Moscow to refrain from suppressing Cossack organisations on Russian territory which were demanding annexation of Russian-populated areas of Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, Articles 11 and 12 in combination still left Russia some valid grounds for criticising Kazakh policies on human rights and demanding fulfilment of the treaty.

Theoretically Article 11 benefited those Russians in Kazakhstan who preferred to receive Russian citizenship. But in practice this meant that in Kazakhstan they would become foreigners, and lose privileges associated with citizenship, for example, access to posts in the Public Service. Thus this provision did little to improve the position of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan, and could help only those set on migration to Russia, a process the Kazakh authorities were only too happy to encourage.

The guarantees in Article 14 were inadequate, primarily because they limited participation by ethnic minorities in state affairs to purely cultural matters. This showed that Russian diplomacy had failed to consolidate in the text of the treaty the right of ethnic Russians to be adequately represented in government and administrative structures at all levels. But Russian did managed to have included in Article 14 an obligation for the parties to conclude a special agreement on cooperation in ensuring national minorities' rights. It was probably in this future agreement that Moscow hoped to cover in more detail all questions related to the position of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan. But events showed that Kazakhstan was in no hurry to conclude such an agreement.

In all, the concessions made by Russia in the text of the treaty were more substantial than those made by Kazakhstan. While receiving unambiguous guarantees of its territorial integrity, Almaty managed to avoid any firm commitments to the Russian minority on its territory. But Moscow, obviously impressed by Nazarbayev's numerous declarations in favour of inter-ethnic peace and accord, accepted his conditions. For example, he had strongly criticised mistakes in "nationality policy" committed in other multi-ethnic republics.<sup>3</sup> In his program, "A Strategy for Kazakhstan's Emergence and Development as a Sovereign State", published on 16 May 1992, Nazarbayev pledged to make inter-ethnic consensus a fundamental tenet of domestic policy.<sup>4</sup> But the leaders of the Russian community in Kazakhstan, more aware of the real situation in the republic, did not receive the treaty well. Kachalin, Ataman of the Ural Cossack force, alleged at the hearings in the Russian State Duma in April 1995 that Yeltsin had fallen for Nazarbayev's assurances and signed the Kazakh version of the treaty,

<sup>3</sup> Nazarbayev on the CIS, Kazakhstan, the Future, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 14.05.92.

<sup>4</sup> Nazarbayev's Strategy for Kazakhstan's Future, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 21.05.92

which made no provision for dual citizenship or for two state languages, Kazakh and Russian.<sup>5</sup>

Soon after conclusion of the treaty it became clear that contrary to official declarations defining Kazakhstan as a multi-ethnic state, the Kazakh authorities had embarked on developing an ethnically based statehood. On 2 June 1992 Kazakhstan's Supreme Soviet approved the first reading of a new constitution, drafted by a commission chaired by Nazarbayev,<sup>6</sup> some provisions of which caused anxiety among the Russian-speaking population. Its preamble proclaimed the "inviolability of Kazakh statehood", and defined Kazakhstan as a state of the "self-determined Kazakh nation". A meeting of the constitutional commission held on 28 October 1992 under Nazarbayev's chairmanship rejected proposals for a federative structure and state bilingualism.<sup>7</sup> Proposals to proclaim Kazakhstan a state of all its multinational people, give Russian the status of second state language, and introduce private ownership of land, put forward more than once by Russian deputies in the Supreme Soviet, were always blocked by the Kazakh majority.<sup>8</sup> Despite fierce opposition by the Russian minority in the Supreme Soviet, the new constitution was formally adopted on 28 January 1993.

An analytical report on the constitutions of the Central Asian states, prepared in the Russian State Duma in 1995, defined independent Kazakhstan's first constitution as "ethnocratic", ie based on the principle of priority of the titular nationality - Kazakhs.<sup>9</sup> Concerns over formulas in Kazakhstan's constitution were voiced not only by the Russian community in Kazakhstan, but by Russian officials in Moscow. For example, at the Duma hearings on Russian-Kazakhstan relations in April 1995 A. Mikitayev, Head of the Directorate for Citizenship Questions in the presidential administration, expressed disapproval of the provision defining Kazakhstan as a state of the "self-determined Kazakh nation" and said it would be better formulated differently.<sup>10</sup>

The principle of priority of the Kazakh nation was also contained in the Law on Immigration adopted in June 1992. It stipulated that "indigenous people" could return to their historic homeland without hindrance.<sup>11</sup> By its emphasis on "indigenous people", Kazakhs, the law explicitly excluded people of other nationalities, for example, Russian Cossacks, many of whom had fled to China

<sup>5</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyaziam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, p. 136.

<sup>6</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report No. 105, 03.06.92.

<sup>7</sup> Nazarbayev Finalizes Last Revisions to New Draft Constitution, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 31.10.92.

<sup>8</sup> Yazkova, A., Lafitskiy, V., Analiz konstitutsiy sredneaziatskogo regiona i praktika mezhnatsional'nykh otnosheniy v Respublike Kazakhstan (analiticheskaya razrabotka), Moscow [No publisher] 1995, p. 1(b).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyaziam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, p. 33.

<sup>11</sup> Immigration Law Published, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 28.08.92.

after the civil war. Moreover, subsequent implementation of the law showed that it hardly considered other ethnic groups, for example, Uigurs, Kalmyks and Dungans, who could contend with Kazakhs for "indigenous" status.

Not surprisingly the law was criticised by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, but to no avail. Its principles were incorporated in the new constitution, which virtually divided Kazakhstan's citizens into two groups - Kazakhs and non-Kazakhs. Article 4 on the one hand prohibited citizens of Kazakhstan from holding citizenship of another country "except in cases envisaged by this constitution and international treaties of the Republic of Kazakhstan", but on the other stipulated that "Kazakhs living in other states are entitled to hold citizenship of the Republic of Kazakhstan together with citizenship of other states". The report of the Duma's research service on Central Asian constitutions said that this provision violated the fundamental principle of equality of citizens' rights.<sup>12</sup>

But for the Kazakh leadership ethnically based demographic and migration policies were important elements in attaining the goal of creating a Kazakh national state. In an interview to Kazakh TV in connection with the first anniversary of independence, Nazarbayev said "Kazakhs are coming back to Kazakhstan from various different countries, from Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Karakalpakstan... All of them are settling down. There are also people leaving Kazakhstan... If we manage to stand on our feet and keep going for 15-20 years the demographic situation will be changed".<sup>13</sup> M. Tatimov, a senior expert in the Information and Analytical Centre of Kazakhstan's presidential administration openly called for an "effective demographic policy", a major component of which should be "directing flows of new settlers from the desiccating Aral basin, as well as migrants from foreign countries, into central and northern regions on the border of Kazakhstan".<sup>14</sup> Kazakhs from Mongolia were indeed sent to north Kazakhstan. Official data indicated that by November 1992 some 30,000 Kazakhs had left Mongolia for Kazakhstan,<sup>15</sup> and another source indicated that in 1991-1992 they totalled 41,000.<sup>16</sup> Thus the primary objective of Kazakhstan's migration and demographic policy was to achieve a decisive shift in the ethnic balance in favour of Kazakhs.<sup>17</sup>

In line with this policy was the decision to move Kazakhstan's capital from Almaty to Akmola, proposed by Nazarbayev in June 1994, and formally adopted by the parliament on 6 July 1994. The Kazakh authorities gave numerous justifications for this decision - overpopulation of Almaty, its location in a

<sup>12</sup> Yazkova, A., Lafitskiy, V., *Analiz konstitutsiy sredneaziatskogo regiona i praktika mezhnatsional'nykh otnosheniy v Respublike Kazakhstan (analiticheskaya razrabotka)*, Moscow [No publisher] 1995, pp. 9-10.

<sup>13</sup> Nazarbayev on Kazakh TV: Talks about Economy, Religion, Nationality Mix, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 18.12.92.

<sup>14</sup> Tatimov, M., *Vliyaniye demograficheskikh protsessov na vnutripoliticheskuyu stabil'nost' Respubliki Kazakhstan // Politika (Almaty)*, No.5, 1995, p. 22.

<sup>15</sup> *Izvestiya*, 11.11.92.

<sup>16</sup> Bakaev, L., *Mezhetnicheskies otnosheniya v Kazakhstane // Evraziyskoye soobshchestvo: ekonomika, politika, bezopasnost'*, No.2, 1995, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> One official at the Kazakhstan Ministry of Foreign Affairs told the author of this thesis that the Kazakh objective was to increase Kazakh numbers to as many as 30 million.

seismically active zone, its proximity to the Chinese border and to politically unstable Tajikistan.<sup>18</sup> But the Russian community in Kazakhstan and many experts in Moscow unambiguously perceived it as an attempt to exercise stricter control over the Russian-populated northern regions, and to stimulate an influx of Kazakhs to change the demographic balance there.

Certain elements of the policy of nation-state building acquired clear anti-Russian overtones. One was a massive campaign to rename Russian settlements into Kazakh. In September 1992 the Supreme Soviet Presidium resolved to rename 29 Russian settlements in six provinces,<sup>19</sup> and shortly afterwards renamed Dzhambeytinskiy district in West Kazakhstan province Syrymsky district, in honour of Syrym Datov, widely portrayed in Kazakhstan as a fighter for independence against Russian rule.<sup>20</sup> In the same province, one other city and three villages were also renamed.<sup>21</sup> Large cities such as Shevchenko, Ust-Kamenogorsk and Semipalatinsk were renamed Aktau, Oskemen, Semey.<sup>22</sup> In the new constitution the name of the capital, Alma-Ata, was changed to Almaty, according to Nazarbayev's secretariat to bring the spelling into line with "the norms of the Kazakh language".<sup>23</sup> The renaming campaign acquired very large dimensions. The Russian Federal Migration Service (RFMS), in a report to the State Duma, noted with concern that in Kazakhstan "Russian settlements are methodically being renamed".<sup>24</sup>

The second element of de-russification was language policy. In Nazarbayev's perception Moscow exercised control over the periphery through "cultural integration", of which "language policy" was a tool.<sup>25</sup> Consequently in building a nation-state independent from Moscow, the role of Russian culture and language in Kazakhstan's public life must be diminished. Kazakhstan's first post-Soviet constitution (Part 8 of the Fundamentals of the Constitutional System) defined the Kazakh language as the only state language, and assigned Russian the status of "language of inter-ethnic communication". The situation in pre-

<sup>18</sup> Izvestiya, 11.06.94; Segodnya, 07.06.97.

<sup>19</sup> In East-Kazakhstan province Dirizhabl became Kyzylsu, Kirovo - Zhanalyk, Andreyevka - Zhanatileu, Komsomol - Zhetyaral, Priozernyy - Tugyl, Pokrovka - Manyrak, Sergeyevka - Kaynar, Budenovka - Toskayyn, Vysokogorka - Karabulak, Maralikh - Maraldy, Pugachevo - Ushbulak, Platovo - Sarytau, Zelenoye - Algabas, Kalinino - Yegindybulak, Tochka - Bayash, Utepova Skalistoye - Izgutyty Aytykova; in Kustanay province Aktobe became Maylin; in Mangistau province Kuybyshevo became Zhyngyldy; in Semipalatinsk province Yernazar became Zhantikei, Igorevka - Sulusary, Saratovka - Koytas, Filippovka - Shymyldyk, Ilyinka - Birlikshil; in Taldy-Kurgan province Andreyevka became Kabanbay, Saratovka - Kyzylkayyn, Glinovka - Ushbulak, Tridtsat' Let Kazakhskoy SSR - Nadirizbek; in Akmola province Budennoye became Khadzhimukana; in South Kazakhstan province Galkino became Zertas [Places Renamed in Kazakhstan, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 19.09.92].

<sup>20</sup> Rayon in West Kazakhstan Renamed after Kazakh National Hero, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 02.10.92.

<sup>21</sup> Megapolis-Express, 05.05.93.

<sup>22</sup> Kuzmin, N., Nochnyye besedy // Molodaya Gvardiya, No.2, 1997, p. 339.

<sup>23</sup> Supreme Kengez Votes to Change Spelling of Alma-Ata, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 12.02.93.

<sup>24</sup> Federal'naya Migratsionnaya Sluzhba Rossii, O rabote Migratsionnoy sluzhby posol'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii v Respublike Kazakhstan v 1994 godu, Doc. No.722, Moscow [No publisher] 13.04.95, p. 14.

<sup>25</sup> Nazarbayev, N., Na poroge XXI veka, Almaty: "Oner", 1996, p. 39.



independence Kazakhstan had been that Russian *de facto* was the main language in the state apparatus and the economy. The Kazakh language was used only by Kazakhs, and not in the workplace environment. 74.5% of Kazakhs were fluent in Russian, and another 8% could speak and read, but not write it. Thus only 17.5% of Kazakhs could not effectively communicate in Russian. But only 2.1% of Russians were fluent in Kazakh, and another 2.3% could speak and read, but not write it.<sup>26</sup> So 95.6% of Russians could not communicate effectively in the Kazakh language.

In all, language policy was an effective way of sidelining Russians. In particular, introduction of Kazakh language requirements for certain positions in government, public service and some professions could effectively deny the overwhelming majority of Russians access to these posts.

It is noteworthy that the language provision of the constitution was adopted while Kazakhs were not even half the population, and Russian was actually the language of the majority. A sociological survey conducted by the Information and Analytical Centre of Kazakhstan's parliament in July 1994 showed that 85.5% of all respondents were fluent in Russian. Even a significant proportion of Kazakhs regarded Russian as the main language. The same survey showed that only 71% of Kazakhs were fluent in the Kazakh language, and another 17.5% could speak and read, but not write it.<sup>27</sup>

The Russian population of Kazakhstan was, naturally, unimpressed by the decision to deny Russian the role of second state language. The problem of the status of Russian became a major irritant in inter-ethnic relations. It must be noted that the majority did in fact support the idea of making Russian the second state language. The July 1994 sociological survey mentioned above found that 48.7% of respondents positively favoured the proposition, and another 6.6% were more inclined to support than oppose it, while only 23.8% were firmly against it. However, among Kazakh respondents alone, 21.7% favoured granting Russian the status of second state language, but 47% opposed it.<sup>28</sup>

Russian authorities expressed dissatisfaction with Kazakhstan's language policy. At the Duma hearings on Russian-Kazakhstan relations Mikitayev agreed that "state measures are probably needed, which would allow for active development of the Kazakh language... But this does not mean that one should discriminate against any other language or other culture". Mikitayev stated that the issue "of the status of the Russian language should be revisited", and Kazakhstan's government should make Russian a state language. He also warned that failure to solve this problem would continue to mar bilateral relations, and have a negative

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<sup>26</sup> Arsenov, M., Kalmykov, S., *Sovremennaya yazikovaya situatsiya v Respublike Kazakhstan // Politika* (Almaty), No.1, 1995, p. 43.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

effect on economic cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan. Mikitayev was supported by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Panov.<sup>29</sup>

Of very direct relevance to language policy were measures taken in the field of education. The RFMS' report to the Duma noted with concern that the number of Russian schools in Kazakhstan was decreasing, and in bilingual schools the number of hours taught in Russian was diminishing.<sup>30</sup> The actual situation with Russian schools is shown in the following tables.

**Table 2.1**  
**Number of Kazakh and Russian language secondary schools**  
**in Kazakhstan (1989-1996)<sup>31</sup>**

Type of school	1989-1990	1990-1991	1991-1992	1992-1993	1993-1994	1994-1995	1995-1996	Change
Kazakh	2613	2768	2905	3081	3379	3387	3364	+751
Russian	3916	3641	3433	3049	2840	2577	2484	-1438
Mixed	1409	1647	1804	2092	2299	2528	2634	+1225
Other	84	86	89	89	92	98	91	+5
All schools	8022	8142	8231	8311	8610	8590	8573	+551

The decrease in the number of Russian schools was not compensated by the creation of so-called mixed schools, as the number of Russian schools dropped by 207 more than the number of mixed schools increased. On the other hand, this number almost exactly equalled the difference between the increase in the total number of schools (551) and that of new Kazakh schools (751). Thus 37.6% of the growth in the number of Kazakh schools was provided by closure of Russian schools. The introduction of mixed schools also meant a decrease in the number of classes taught in Russian. Unfortunately the figures on the proportion of Russian and Kazakh classes in mixed schools is unavailable. But logic suggests that introduction of Kazakh classes in former Russian schools meant abolishing a corresponding number of Russian classes. This conclusion is substantiated by the data in the next table, which shows the decrease in the number of Russian classes.

<sup>29</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyazam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, pp. 10, 28.

<sup>30</sup> Federal'naya Migratsionnaya sluzhba Rossii, O rabote migratsionnoy sluzhby posol'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii v Respublike Kazakhstan v 1994 godu, Doc. No.722, Moscow [No publisher] 13.04.95, p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> Source: Etnokul'turnoe obrazovanie v Kazakhstane: tsifry i fakty // Mysl' (Almaty), No.9, 1996, p. 67. [The publication is based on data provided by Kazakhstan's Statistical Committee, Ministries of Culture and Education, National Agency of Press and Mass Media].

**Table 2.2**  
**Distribution of pupils in secondary schools as per language of study**  
**in thousands and as percentage of the total (1991-1996)<sup>32</sup>**

Language	1991-1992		1992-1993		1993-1994		1994-1995		1995-1996	
Kazakh	1063.6	34.1	1153.9	37.2	1232.7	39.9	1302.6	42.7	1358.5	44.7
Russian	1975.3	63.3	1865.2	60.1	1772.0	57.4	1655.5	54.3	1584.9	52.2
Other	79.01	2.6	81.5	2.7	81.13	2.7	88.7	3	91.2	3.1

On the other hand, the table demonstrates that despite vigorous efforts by the government to expand the system of Kazakh language education, the number of pupils attending Russian classes still exceeded those attending Kazakh classes. In 1995/96 the number of Kazakh schoolchildren attending Russian classes was 327,800.<sup>33</sup>

In higher education the government also embarked on a policy of gradual transfer of more university courses into the Kazakh language. However in this field the measures were less drastic than in the secondary schools, because transferring tertiary education into Kazakh was much more complex, demanding and costly. In 1992-1996 the proportion of university students attending courses taught in Kazakh increased from 22.1% to 30.9%.<sup>34</sup> This, however, did not cause ethnic Russians particular anxiety, as enough courses were taught in Russian to satisfy demand. But Russians were concerned that ethnic Kazakhs received privileged access to higher education.

Research commissioned by the Kazakhstan government showed that in 1993 more Kazakhs than Russians enrolled as first year students. In Kazakhstan's National University in Almaty this difference acquired striking proportions. Kazakhs were 79.5% of those admitted, Russians only 14.6%. B. Abdigaliev explained this phenomenon by the fact that there are more Kazakhs than Russians under the age of 30. He claimed that 79.4% of applicants to the National University were ethnic Kazakhs, and only 13.4% ethnic Russians.<sup>35</sup> But it is hardly likely that there are almost six times as many Kazakhs under 30 as there are Russians, especially in Almaty, where Russians are 59% of the population, and Kazakhs only 22%.<sup>36</sup> The situation was similar in other Russian-majority regions. For example, in Karaganda in 1994 Kazakhs were only 18-20% of the population,

<sup>32</sup> Source: Etnokul'turnoe obrazovanie v Kazakhstane: tsifry i faktyi // Mysl' (Almaty), No.9, 1996, pp. 67-68.

<sup>33</sup> Etnokul'turnoe obrazovanie v Kazakhstane: tsifry i fakti // Misl (Almaty), No.9, 1996, p. 68.

<sup>34</sup> The total number of university students in Kazakhstan was 280,700 in 1992/93 and 260,000 in 1995/96. [Etnokul'turnoe obrazovanie v Kazakhstane: tsifry i fakti // Misl (Almaty), No.9, 1996, pp. 71-72].

<sup>35</sup> Abdigaliev, B., Russkie v Kazakhstane: problemy, mify i realnost' // Kazakhstan i mirovye soobshchestvo, No.1(2), 1995, pp. 74-75.

<sup>36</sup> Harris, Ch., Novye russkie menshinstva: statisticheskoe obozrenie // Evraziyskoye soobshchestvo: ekonomika, politika, bezopasnost', No.2, 1995, p. 44.

but 85% of the students in tertiary education.<sup>37</sup> In Akmola province Kazakhs were 21.7% of the population, 30% of secondary school students, but 51% of students in tertiary education.<sup>38</sup> A privileged position in higher education would enable Kazakhs to compete successfully against Russians for the more prestigious and better-paid jobs, and in the long run ensure the emergence of a predominantly Kazakh political and business elite. On the other hand, creation of disadvantageous conditions for Russians would compel many of them to seek educational opportunities for themselves or their children outside Kazakhstan, and thus indirectly encourage them to emigrate.

The second major element of the de-russification program was the policy on privatisation of state property. Historically Kazakhstan's major industries had been staffed and managed by ethnic Russians. This was explained firstly by the need for highly qualified managers, engineers and workers, and, secondly, by Kazakh preference for agricultural over industrial employment. Hence most qualified personnel for industry came from Russia, so that at independence 79% of Kazakhstan's industrial employees were Russians.<sup>39</sup> After the collapse of the USSR, Kazakhstan's Russians remained in control of Kazakhstan's industry. A sociological survey of industrial enterprises in Almaty in 1994 showed that Russians substantially outnumbered Kazakhs at all levels of management. Thus among engineers and officers Russians were 67%, Kazakhs - 14.3%, among leading specialists 68.1% and 15.1% respectively, at the level of directors - 59.5% and 18%. Even among manual workers, 58.8% were Russians and only 21.3% Kazakhs.<sup>40</sup>

In May 1992, just before conclusion of the Russian-Kazakh treaty "On Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance" Nazarbayev issued a decree which was meant to create the impression that ethnic Russians would receive fair treatment in privatisation. The decree envisaged privatisation taking place at the request of the labour force, which would be automatically entitled to 25% of all shares, and senior executives would also be entitled to a certain number of shares.<sup>41</sup>

It soon became clear that the goal pursued by the Kazakh elite was to deprive ethnic Russians of economic power, and re-distribute national wealth in favour of Kazakhs. As L. Sharonov, entrepreneur and commercial director of the 21st Century Fund in Almaty put it, Russian and Slavic entrepreneurs were driven into a corner, and "Joint-stock companies created on the basis of state enterprises,

<sup>37</sup> Megapolis-Express, 02.02.94.

<sup>38</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Komitet po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyazyam s sootchestvennikami, Spravka o polozhenii v Kazakhstane, Moscow [No publisher] 1995.

<sup>39</sup> Harris, Ch., Novie russkie menshinstva: statisticheskoe obozrenie // Evraziyskoye soobshchestvo: ekonomika, politika, bezopasnost', No.2, 1995, p. 53.

<sup>40</sup> Abdigaliev, B., Russkie v Kazakhstane: problemy, mify i realnost' // Kazakhstan i mirovye soobshchestva, No.1(2), 1995, p. 76.

<sup>41</sup> Privatisation Decree Leaves State with Controlling Role, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 14.05.92.

total control by state bureaucrats, who are mainly people of Kazakh nationality or puppets, the dictatorship of the National State Bank in the credit-and-finance sphere - all this signifies that what is actually occurring is a takeover of the republic's economy by a single nationality".<sup>42</sup>

In the opinion of A.Dixon, who made a thorough study of Nazarbayev's economic policy, privatisation in Kazakhstan acquired a definite ethnic bias favouring Kazakhs. He also gave examples of such unfair privatisation.<sup>43</sup> This opinion is shared by Russian experts. According to the Duma report on the Central Asian constitutions, privatisation in Kazakhstan was driven "by attempts by ruling groups and clans of the titular nationality to gain leading positions in the distribution of 'public' property..., and correspondingly take the main levers of power into their hands...In this situation logic leads them along the path of sidelining major competitors, who are thought to be and really are the heads of the largest industrial enterprises and technical experts, incomers from Russia".<sup>44</sup> As an example of unfair privatisation practices Russian observers referred to the principle of distribution of privatisation coupons in Kazakhstan. Each urban resident received 100 coupons, those in rural areas 120. Since Russians predominate in urban and Kazakhs in rural areas, the distribution of coupons favoured Kazakhs over Russians.<sup>45</sup>

When in April 1993 Kazakhstan launched a national privatisation program for 1993-1995, the authorities could not simply exclude industrial management and labour, predominantly ethnic Russians, from the process. To do so would have caused serious discontent among ethnic Russians, and probably provoked massive industrial action which could have led to industrial collapse, because there were not enough qualified Kazakhs to replace the Russians. Almaty also had to take account of likely international repercussions. Hence the program contained important limitations on privatisation. It was to be conducted on state initiative, and under state control. Besides, in the privatisation of the largest and usually most lucrative companies, involved in mining non-ferrous, precious and rare metals or developing oil and gas fields, the government reserved around 70% of shares for itself, thus effectively retaining control, preventing management or labour conducting privatisation to suit their interests, and leaving the decisive word to government bureaucrats, mostly Kazakhs.<sup>46</sup>

While retaining control of such enterprises, the government started to make them available for contract management by foreign companies with a right to further privatisation. Decisions on such contracts were taken by Kazakh authorities at various levels, and the employees of the enterprises had no leverage on them.

<sup>42</sup> Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 05.06.93.

<sup>43</sup> See: Dixon, A., *Kazakhstan: Political Reform and Economic Development*, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1994.

<sup>44</sup> Yazkova, A., Lafitskiy, V., *Analiz konstitutsiy sredneaziatskogo regiona i praktika mezhnatsional'nykh otnosheniy v Respublike Kazakhstan (analiticheskaya razrabotka)*, Moscow [No publisher] 1995, p. 12.

<sup>45</sup> *Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiei E.M.Kozhokina*, Moscow: RISI, 1995, p. 32.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30-32.

The contracts were concluded without due consideration to the efficiency of foreign companies, their business reputation, or their ability to operate in the specific conditions of Kazakhstan.

According to Nazarbayev, in 1997 200,000 workers were employed at enterprises handed over to foreign management or privatised by foreigners.<sup>47</sup> This is a large proportion of industrial workers for a country like Kazakhstan. But the privatisation did not bring any noticeable improvements in Kazakhstan's economic performance, even in the industries where the majority of enterprises were handed to foreign management.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, some foreign companies which had taken over Kazakhstan's enterprises went bankrupt, ceased operations and retrenched workers. Others applied the devious practice of non-payment of wages. This caused protest actions from workers, which acquired different forms, with the most desperate marching on and staging demonstrations in Almaty. The revenue received from privatisation was also less than impressive. The Russian weekly *Zavtra* in April 1997 wrote, citing expert opinion, that Nazarbayev's government sold to foreigners or handed over to foreign management 98% of the republic's industry for "a ludicrously small sum, not exceeding three billion dollars".<sup>49</sup>

All this causes serious doubts that the major goal of passing over Kazakhstan's major industries into foreign hands was motivated by purely economic considerations. It seems that the main reason was political. The tactic was ingenious, because it enabled two major goals to be achieved simultaneously. Firstly, it deprived ethnic Russian managements of most levers of economic power, and transferred it to foreign companies almost totally dependent on the goodwill of the Kazakh leadership, which thus achieved at least indirect control over the enterprises. Secondly, ethnic Russians were sidelined from privatisation, and deprived of property they could legitimately claim. Most of the earnings from the sales were redistributed in favour of ethnic Kazakhs, and moreover Kazakh bureaucrats who supervised the transfers naturally got their fair share of bribes. This also explains why companies from Russia were sidelined from the privatisation, despite having some natural advantages such as first hand experience with technological processes at Kazakhstan's enterprises and knowledge of Kazakhstan's business practices. If the enterprises went under Russian control it would mean not diminishing but increasing Russian influence in Kazakhstan, and naturally increasing the influence of Russian diaspora in the republic. That was precisely the outcome that Nazarbayev wanted to avoid.

According to A.Tuleyev, Russia's Minister for Cooperation with CIS States, 90% of Kazakhstan's industry was handed over "to many third countries apart from Russia". He also complained that Kazakhstan "is intentionally avoiding solution of questions dealing with establishment of joint enterprises with Russia, or

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<sup>47</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 28.05.97.

<sup>48</sup> For example, in ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy production continuously fell in 1993-1994. In 1995 it managed to regain some ground, but still fell far short of the level of production in the last years of the USSR. [See: Kazakhstan: Transition of the State, A World Bank Country Study, Washington: World Bank, 1997, p. 226].

<sup>49</sup> Boroday, A., Ray Nazarbayeva // *Zavtra*, No.13(174), 1997.

financial and industrial groups, is dragging its heels over the adoption of regulations on their forming, while opening unlimited opportunities for penetration of the country's economy by Western capital". As an example, he pointed to the sale of the controlling share of the republic's chrome industry to Japan Chrome Corporation,<sup>50</sup> which he said, was done without prior consultations with the CIS member states. "Now metal producers of Russia and other states have to buy chrome at a higher price, which has badly hit the economics of the entire metal making industry," he said. He added that a similar situation had arisen with Kazakhstan's sale to foreign firms of semifinished titanium, with the result that dozens of production units came to a standstill in Russia and other CIS states.<sup>51</sup>

An absolutely different approach was chosen by the Kazakh leadership in relation to privatisation of land. It was decided not to privatise it at all. What lay behind this decision was realisation that land privatisation would benefit mostly Russian farmers engaged in sedentary agriculture, and do very little for, or even harm, the interests of Kazakhs engaged in animal grazing. In northern Kazakhstan most agricultural land was worked by Russians, and its privatisation would give Russians control of large areas. This would on the one hand give Russian agricultural producers substantial economic autonomy, and on the other would create difficulties for further resettlement of ethnic Kazakhs in northern regions. Hence the first post-Soviet constitution of Kazakhstan defined land as "the exclusive property of the state".<sup>52</sup>

On 19 April 1994 Nazarbayev issued a decree on land ownership, which granted citizens the right to lifetime, inheritable possession of plots of land, and instructed local authorities to sell the right to possess, use or lease land to individuals or legal entities. But only right of use was involved; the land remained state property and could easily be repossessed.<sup>53</sup> Naturally this conferred little security on any land users, especially non-Kazakhs, who could expect in an ethnically based state to be the first victims of government arbitrariness. Thus the problem of private land ownership remained a major issue in which Russian and Kazakh interests clashed.

The most important element of de-russification was the ousting of ethnic Russians from positions of influence in the government, representative bodies and public service. The percentage of Kazakhs in the top echelons of power in Kazakhstan (heads and their deputies of ministries, departments and province administrations) continuously increased, while that of non-Kazakhs decreased. Non-Kazakhs held 50% of such posts in 1985, 49.7% in 1988, 41.5% in 1992, and

<sup>50</sup> Japanese Embassy in Almaty officially announced in summer 1997 that there was no company with such a name ever registered anywhere in Japan. [Information is provided by Merhat Sharipzhan from RFE/RL Kazakh Broadcasting Service on 04.02.98].

<sup>51</sup> Russian Minister Responds to President Nazarbayev's Remarks, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 22.05.97.

<sup>52</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiey E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, p. 31.

<sup>53</sup> Izvestiya, 13.04.94.

only 25% in 1994.<sup>54</sup> The Russian Federal Migration Service's 1995 report to the Duma pointed with concern to the continuation of "purposeful ousting of persons of non-Kazakh nationality from leading posts".<sup>55</sup>

Information on the first half of 1994 indicated that there were no non-Kazakhs among the five state advisers. Six of the seven Deputy Prime Ministers were Kazakhs. In the President's offices only one senior official in seven was a non-Kazakh. In certain ministries at the level of minister and deputy minister the ratios were: Ministry of Education 1:6, Finance 3:5, Transportation 2:4, Press and Public Information 1:4, Economics 1:7, Justice 1:4, the National Security Committee 1:6, Committee for State Television and Radio 0:5.<sup>56</sup>

Konstantin Zatulin, Chairman of the Duma Committee for CIS Affairs and Ties with Compatriots, noted in his report on his visit to Kazakhstan in March 1994 that Russians "continue being ousted from the sphere of political and ideological leadership" and "are poorly represented in new entrepreneurial circles... In Kazakhstan we encounter a deliberate, well-thought out policy of the ruling Kazakh elite, concerned to keep the Russian population as a labouring estate (workers, engineers, specialists) and worried by the prospect of political self-determination of Russians as citizens of Kazakhstan".<sup>57</sup>

Meanwhile a similar process was occurring at province level, including in northern Kazakhstan. In November 1993 leaders of the Russian community in North Kazakhstan province complained in an interview that the province's entire leadership was being replaced by Kazakhs.<sup>58</sup> In 1994 Kazakhs in senior posts in the Akmola province administration rose from 42.5% to 51.5%.<sup>59</sup> In the same year, in Kokchetau province administration, 5 out of 7 departmental heads, 12 of 15 heads of directorates, 8 of 10 committee chairmen, 18 of 19 province procurators, and all the city judges, were Kazakhs.<sup>60</sup> At the highest levels (head of administration to chief of staff) in provincial administrations the ratios of non-Kazakhs to Kazakhs were: Karaganda 2:6, Pavlodar 3:6, Turgay 3:6, Almaty (province) 2:7, and Almaty (city) 2:9,<sup>61</sup> although Russians substantially outnumbered Kazakhs in all these provinces. At the 1995 Duma hearings on Russian-Kazakhstan relations Mikitayev said he considered it "unreasonable" when in northern provinces of

<sup>54</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Komitet po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyaziam s sootchestvennikami, Spravka o polozhenii v Kazakhstane, Moscow [No publisher] 1995.

<sup>55</sup> Federal'naya Migratsionnaya Sluzhba Rossii, O rabote Migratsionnoy sluzhby posol'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii v Respublike Kazakhstan v 1994 godu, Doc. No.722, Moscow [No publisher] 13.04.95, p. 14.

<sup>56</sup> Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 02.04.94.

<sup>57</sup> Zatulin, K., Otchet ob itogakh poezdki gruppy deputatov Federal'nogo Sobraniya, nablyudavshikh za vyborami v Verkhovniy Sovet Respubliki Kazakhstan, Doc. No.316/333, Moscow [No publisher] 01.04.94, p. 4.

<sup>58</sup> Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 27.11.93.

<sup>59</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Komitet po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyaziam s sootchestvennikami, Spravka o polozhenii v Kazakhstane, Moscow [No publisher] 1995.

<sup>60</sup> Megapolis-Express, 02.02.94.

<sup>61</sup> Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 02.04.94.



Kazakhstan "leaders of territories are replaced on ethnic grounds and there remain even fewer Russians".<sup>62</sup>

A special case was Kazakhstan's representative bodies, especially the Supreme Soviet, formed by popular election. The Kazakh leadership could not prevent Russians from electing Russians to the Supreme Soviet, and this could theoretically give ethnic Russians and other non-Kazakhs a chance to take control of at least one branch of state power. The first post-Soviet parliamentary elections were scheduled for 7 March 1994, and the most widespread prognosis was that there would be a "Russian parliament", on the grounds that the Russian-speaking population made up the greater part of the electorate in Kazakhstan. That conclusion<sup>63</sup> was, of course, based on the assumption that the elections would be free and fair.

But the Nazarbayev government did its best to prevent such an outcome. Gross violations of democratic electoral norms became obvious at the early stages of preparations for the elections, most seriously in setting the boundaries of electoral districts. As a result the numbers of voters per district differed substantially, from 16,000 to 106,000 according to Mansurov, Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Moscow.<sup>64</sup> The 176 winning candidates comprised 103 Kazakhs (58%), 49 Russians, 10 Ukrainians and 14 of other nationalities.<sup>65</sup> Thus Kazakhs had a clear parliamentary majority, well above their proportion of the population.

The unfairness and undemocratic nature of the elections was pointed out by international observers, including a CSCE delegation.<sup>66</sup> Zatulin welcomed the CSCE observers' conclusions, and warned that after the elections Kazakhstan "entered a very risky stage of the development of the political situation"<sup>67</sup> In RFMS' assessment, the elections "not only consolidated the Kazakh nation's dominant position in the multi-ethnic state, but also deepened the division between the 'indigenous' and 'non-indigenous' population". Their dominance in the parliament "allowed the Kazakh majority practically to block adoption by the Kazakhstan Supreme Soviet of decisions vitally important to the non-indigenous population, capable of stabilising the situation in the Republic".<sup>68</sup>

Overall the de-russification policy was not an expression of a simple sentimental desire to restore historical justice as seen by the Kazakh leadership, and revive national customs and culture. On the agenda were clear and specific issues

<sup>62</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyazam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, p. 38.

<sup>63</sup> Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 02.04.94.

<sup>64</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyazam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, p. 64.

<sup>65</sup> Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 15.03.94.

<sup>66</sup> Segodnya, 11.03.94.

<sup>67</sup> Zatulin, K., Otchet ob itogakh poezdki gruppy deputatov Federal'nogo Sobraniya, nablyudavshikh za vyborami v Verkhovniy Sovet Respubliki Kazakhstan, Doc. No.316/333, Moscow [No publisher] 01.04.94, pp. 1-3.

<sup>68</sup> Federal'naya Migratsionnaya Sluzhba Rossii, O rabote Migratsionnoy sluzhby posol'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii v Respublike Kazakhstan v 1994 godu, Doc. No.722, Moscow [No publisher] 13.04.95, p. 2.

of political and economic power. Kazakhstan had a Russian community almost numerically equal to the Kazakhs, generally better educated and qualified, especially for industrial posts, and strategically positioned in control of Kazakhstan's most important economic sectors. The only advantage Kazakhs had over Russians was control of state power, and they wanted to retain and exploit this advantage. Hence de-russification was aimed at achieving greater consolidation of political and economic power in Kazakh hands, an objective hardly achievable democratically, since the non-Kazakh population notably exceeded that of Kazakhs.

At first sight de-russification was in striking contrast to Nazarbayev's declared aim of maintaining inter-ethnic accord. But in reality there was no contradiction. Analysis of the political program of the pro-Nazarbayev Union of People's Unity of Kazakhstan (UPUK),<sup>69</sup> formed on 6 February 1993, gives a clear indication of his strategy. References to national equality concerned exclusively the cultural rights of ethnic minorities, and avoided the issue of their role in political life, state institutions and government. In respect of politics the program had a definite nationalist inclination. It said that UPUK supported "state self-determination of the Kazakh nation and its further endowment with real substance". However, the program, obviously with reference to other Kazakh nationalist parties, criticised "radical nationalist" tendencies in defending Kazakh national interests. It condemned "radical and rapid change of the balance of interests in favour of its own nation", as "fraught with conflicts...Ethnic and social conflicts can put a brake on the development of all nations". As an alternative the program put forward a concept of "evolutionary development with equality of all nationalities and ethnic groups, and reaching concord", but only while recognising that "in a number of issues the Kazakh nation, given the fact that Kazakhstan is the only statehood for Kazakhs, has priority".<sup>70</sup>

Thus the policy advocated by the UPUK program was an evolutionary, gradual transformation of Kazakhstan into a Kazakh national state. This policy did not differ in substance from those of other ethnic nationalists in the post-Soviet, post-Socialist space. However, it differed in form, taking account of Kazakhstan's specific demographic and geographical conditions. Nazarbayev had to act much more subtly and ingeniously than his counterparts in other republics, anticipating that radical actions could lead to armed conflict with the Russian population, and to Kazakhstan's being split into two parts - north and south - along ethnic lines. The following table shows that such a scenario was quite plausible, given the geographical distribution of the Russian population.

<sup>69</sup> Most of the provisions of the program were later incorporated into Nazarbayev's brochure "Ideological Consolidation of the Society as a Condition of Progress of Kazakhstan". (See: Nazarbayev, N., *Ideynaya konsolidatsiya obshchestva - kak uslovie progressa Kazakhstana*, Almaty: "Kazakhstan - XXI vek", 1993).

<sup>70</sup> *Programma Soyuzo Narodnoe Edinstvo Kazakhstana // Zaslavskaya, M., Politicheskie partii i obshchestvennie ob'edineniya Kazakhstana na sovremennom etape razvitiya*, Almaty: KISI, 1994, pp. 208-211.

**Table 2.3**  
**Regions of Kazakhstan with Russian Majority or Plurality<sup>71</sup>**

Province	Russians	Ukrainians	Belorussians	Kazakhs	Others	Population (thousands)
Akmola	46.3%	8.5%	2.7%	21.7%	20.8%	845.8
Kostanay	47%	15.8%	-	17.4%	19.8%	1054.9
Kokchetau	36.5%	8.4%	2.6%	28.9%	23.6%	654.9
Karaganda	52.7%	7.9%	2.3%	20.7%	16.4%	1265.6
Pavlodar	44.5%	9.2%	-	31.9%	14.4%	942.2
North-Kazakhstan	62%	-	-	-	-	601.0
East-Kazakhstan	65.9%	-	-	27.2%	6.9%	937.3
West-Kazakhstan <sup>72</sup>	36.3%	-	-	54.1%	9.6%	668.4

Nazarbayev wanted to keep the whole of Kazakhstan for Kazakhs, but understood that the goal of a Kazakh national state within the existing borders could be achieved only by gradual, evolutionary means, waiting until the ethnic balance changed decisively in Kazakh favour. Eruption into a violent ethnic conflict, as in Yugoslavia or Moldova, would be disastrous above all for the Kazakhs themselves.

Initially it seemed that de-russification was achieving its goal. It led to increased Russian emigration from Kazakhstan, though accurate figures on emigration, its ethnic, occupational and age composition, geographical distribution among provinces of Kazakhstan and other related details are difficult to establish. In April 1993 the Kazakh authorities issued a directive classifying the data on emigration,<sup>73</sup> and some figures were released from time to time, but they were not systematic, detailed or verifiable, and were sometimes mutually contradictory. Figures provided by Russia were not accurate either, sometimes bordering on estimates, though for a different reason, namely that not all emigrants from Kazakhstan officially registered as refugees or forced migrants. Many simply moved to relatives, friends or prearranged employment, and some Russians or Russian-speakers emigrated not to Russia but to Ukraine, Belarus or countries outside the CIS, though apart from ethnic Germans, the overwhelming majority emigrated to Russia.

Nevertheless, combining incomplete data from the various sources can give a rough picture of the emigration process. Thus the excess of emigrants from over immigrants to Kazakhstan increased from 67,000 in 1991 to 96,000 in 1992, a

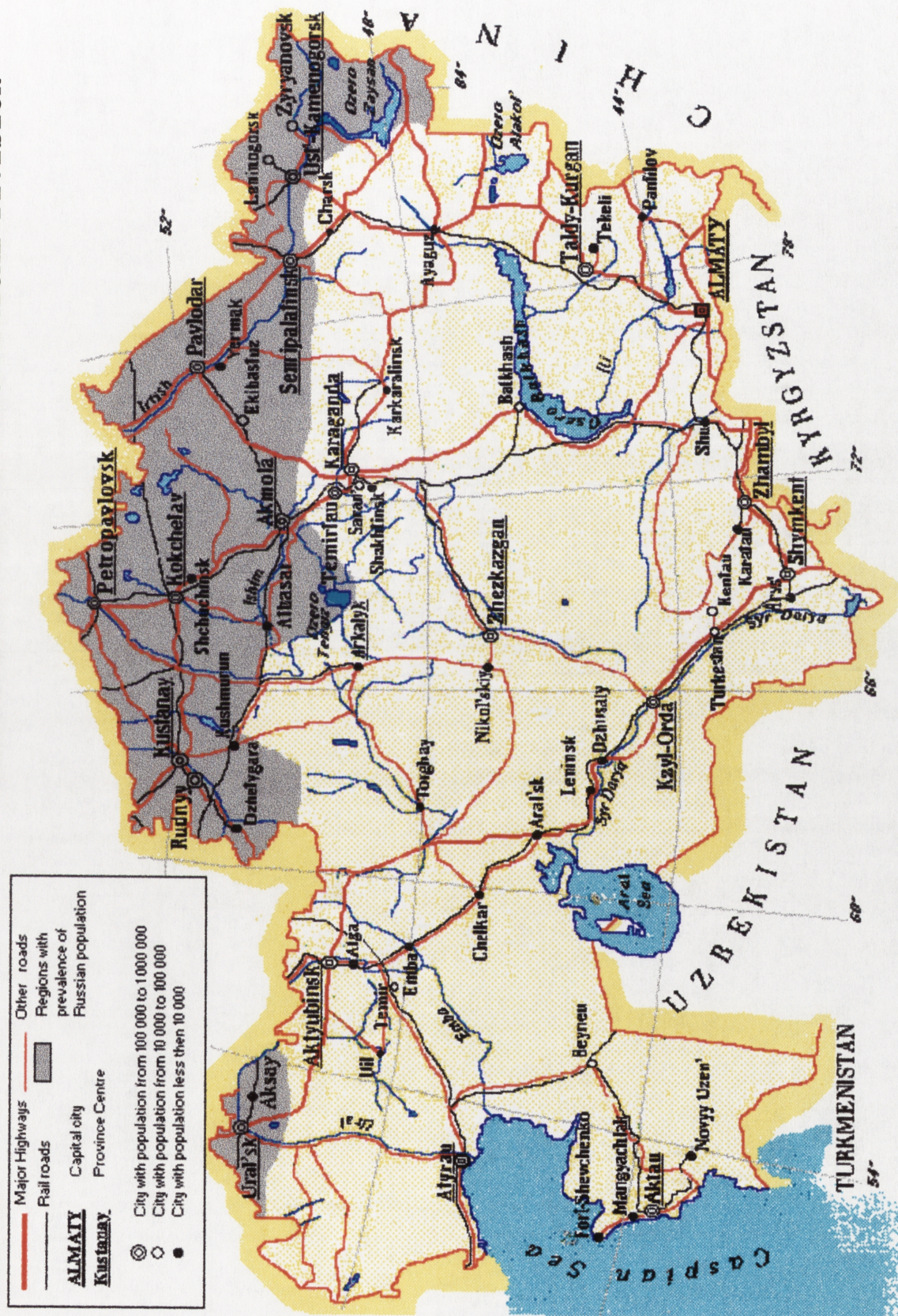
<sup>71</sup> Sources: Ayaganov, B., Kuandikov, A., Baymagambetov, S., *Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya v Kazakhstane: regional'nyy opyt*, // *Politika* (Almaty), No.1, 1995, pp. 39-42; *Karta Kazakhstana*, Almaty: PKO "Kartografiya", 1996; Harris, Ch., *Novyye russkie menshinstva: statisticheskoe obozrenie* // *Evraziyskoye soobshchestvo: ekonomika, politika, bezopasnost'*, No.2, 1995, p. 40.

<sup>72</sup> In this province there is a distinct geographical split between the north and the south. Russian population settled compactly in the north prevails in the provincial centre Uralsk and adjacent districts - Zelenovskiy, Priuralniy, Terektinskiy and Burlinskiy, as well the town of Aksay.

<sup>73</sup> "Russia" TV Says Russians Still Emigrating From Kazakhstan, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 03.01.94; Megapolis-Express, 02.02.94.



**KAZAKHSTAN: ETHNIC-GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISION**





43.3% rise.<sup>74</sup> According to Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Moscow, Mansurov, 142,000 Russians emigrated from Kazakhstan to Russia in 1992, 145,000 in 1993, and 255,000 in 1994. In the same period 115,000 Russians immigrated to Kazakhstan.<sup>75</sup> Data provided by the Russian Federal Migration Service indicate total emigration from Kazakhstan of 369,000 in 1992, and 333,000 in 1993.<sup>76</sup> According to Kazakhstan's State Statistical Committee, in 1994 the republic lost 410,000 through emigration, 266,637 (65%) of them Russians.<sup>77</sup>

*Kazakhstanskaya pravda* recently published statistics on migration. In 1992-1996 Kazakhstan lost 730,000 through emigration. 344,112 emigrated to Russia in 1994, 187,390 in 1995, and 138,693 in 1996, while immigration in the same three years was 42,426, 46,860 and 31,888 respectively.<sup>78</sup> These figures appear to include all migrants, not only Russians, and relate only to emigration to Russia. They contradict Nazarbayev's own May 1997 statement that since independence a total of 2.3 million had emigrated from Kazakhstan, while 670,000 had immigrated,<sup>79</sup> giving a net negative migration balance of 1.63 million, not the 730,000 cited by *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*. However, the latter figure may represent only ethnic Russians who emigrated from Kazakhstan to Russia.

Despite the incompleteness of the data, it can be concluded that emigration from Kazakhstan was massive, Russians were a majority among emigrants, and immigration to Kazakhstan in the same period was small by comparison. The peak of emigration was reached in 1994, and it then began gradually to subside, clearly because those most anxious and able to leave had already gone. Nevertheless, Kazakhstan's negative migration balance still substantially exceeds that of the USSR's last years.

At the 1995 Duma hearings on Russian-Kazakhstan relations Zatulin noted with concern that the flow of migrants from Kazakhstan was constantly increasing, and was capable of "sweeping away all positive results of any economic growth and any economic reforms in Russian Federation".<sup>80</sup> Kazakh officials did not deny the massive scale of emigration. At the same hearings Kazakhstan's Ambassador Mansurov admitted that migration from Kazakhstan was "acquiring a massive character" and that Kazakhstan's leadership was "concerned about this problem".<sup>81</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Khroustalev, M., *Tsentral'naya Aziya vo vneshney politike Rossii*, Moscow: MGIMO, 1994, p. 34.

<sup>75</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, *Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyazyam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh"*, Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, p. 54.

<sup>76</sup> Federal'naya Migratsionnaya Sluzhba Rossii, *O rabote Migratsionnoy sluzhby posol'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii v Respublike Kazakhstan v 1994 godu*, Doc. No.722, Moscow [No publisher] 13.04.95, pp. 3-4.

<sup>77</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, *Komitet po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyazyam s sootchestvennikami*, *Spravka o polozhenii v Kazakhstane*, Moscow [No publisher] 1995.

<sup>78</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 07.11.97.

<sup>79</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 28.05.97.

<sup>80</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, *Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyazyam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh"*, Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, p. 4.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

The RFMS report to the Duma contained this conclusion: "There are probably no possibilities for satisfactory solution of inter-ethnic problems, if the Republic of Kazakhstan proceeds along the path of further consolidation of sovereignty. Each step in this direction will painfully affect the mass of the Russian-speaking population, pushing it to an inevitable exodus..."<sup>82</sup>

While not denying the scale of emigration, Nazarbayev's government tried to find acceptable explanations for it, not always mutually consistent. On one occasion Nazarbayev in fact admitted that it was caused by errors in nationality policy. In his message to Kazakhstan's parliament on 9 June 1994 he included mistakes in language policy and in determining the status of state language among the reasons for the emigration, and declared it "necessary to adopt a new law on languages without delay, and eliminate any discrimination against the Russian language, which Kazakhs and other peoples need for their development just as much as the Russian-speaking population does". He also mentioned "bias in personnel policy" and "imbalance in admissions of applicants to higher and specialised secondary educational institutions" as negative factors stimulating emigration, and said the time had come to call attention to manifestations of everyday nationalism.<sup>83</sup>

But nine months later the tune changed. At the first session of the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan on 24 March 1995 Nazarbayev stated that "it would be naive to seek reasons for emigration in non-existent discrimination on ethnic grounds".<sup>84</sup> Most Kazakh experts concentrated on proving that primarily economic reasons stimulated Russian emigration. At the Duma hearings on Russian-Kazakhstan relations Mansurov produced results of a sociological survey, conducted by Kazakhstan's State Statistical Committee among 6,000 emigrants (Table 2.4).<sup>85</sup> Obviously respondents were allowed to name more than one reason, because Mansurov's percentages add up to more than 100%. Table 2.5 represents the results of a sociological survey conducted by the Information and Analytical Centre of Kazakhstan's parliament in July 1994.<sup>86</sup> This survey was of all ethnic groups, including Kazakhs, and this diluted the specific reasons for Russian emigration.

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<sup>82</sup> Federal'naya Migratsionnaya Sluzhba Rossii, O rabote Migratsionnoy sluzhby posol'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii v Respublike Kazakhstan v 1994 godu, Doc. No.722, Moscow [No publisher] 13.04.95, pp. 10-11.

<sup>83</sup> Izvestiya, 15.06.94.

<sup>84</sup> Nazarbayev, N., Za mir i soglasie v nashem obshchem dome, Doklad na pervoy sessii Assamblei narodov Kazakhstana // Kazakhstan i mirovye soobshchestvo, No.1(2), 1995, pp. 8, 16.

<sup>85</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyaziam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, p. 56.

<sup>86</sup> Arsenov, M., Kalmykov, S., Sovremennaya yazikovaya situatsiya v Respublike Kazakhstan // Politika (Almaty), No.1, 1995, p. 49.

**Table 2.4**

Reason for emigration	% respondents
Dissatisfied with high prices	46%
Dissatisfied with low wages	24.6%
Food and consumer goods shortages	19%
Lack of prospects in work	16%
Having problems finding work	12%
Poor housing conditions	11%

**Table 2.5**

Reason for emigration	% respondents
Inability of authorities to ensure "normal life in future"	14.6%
Higher living standards in country of intended migration	14%
Want to reunite with their families	11%
Worsening inter-ethnic relations	7%
Language problem	5.5%
Discrimination on ethnic grounds	3%
Undecided, and other reasons	44.9%

**Table 2.6**

Reason for emigration	% of respondents
Unstable economic situation	15.5%
Worsening inter-ethnic relations	13.4%
Adoption of legislation violating human rights	6.0%
Threat of unemployment	5.6%
Rise in prices	4.7%
Discrimination against national minorities	3.1%
Inability to solve the problem of accommodation	2.6%
Difficulties of adaptation to new life	2.6%
Inability to continue education	1.6%
Danger of becoming a victim of physical violence	0.6%
Other	4.7%
Undecided	3.3%
Did not answer	36.3%
Number of respondents	1118

Data provided by pro-Russian organisations presented a different picture. A survey conducted by the Sociological Centre of Ust-Kamenogorsk city administration in late 1994 showed that 39.8% of people emigrated because of ethnic and language discrimination, and 36.3% because of economic problems,<sup>87</sup> thus rating both economic problems and discrimination high, but with discrimination slightly more important. This is supported by data from independent research. For example, a survey performed in December 1994 by a group of American experts (Table 2.6) identified the following motives for Russian emigration from Kazakhstan.<sup>88</sup>

The survey demonstrated that those emigrating for economic reasons and those affected by the unfavourable inter-ethnic situation were almost equal in numbers, 27.8% and 27.3% respectively. This confirms that nationality policy in Kazakhstan served as a very direct stimulus to Russian emigration, and played no lesser role than the worsening economic situation. Besides, the very methodology of separating economic and inter-ethnic reasons seems faulty. In practice they are closely interrelated. If a person's ethnic background causes him to lose out to the titular nationality in the privatisation process, the search for well-paid employment, or prospects of good tertiary education for his children, he will naturally see economic prospects as grim, and choose to emigrate even if not currently experiencing any direct ethnic discrimination.

Figures on the ethnic composition of the migration balance in Kazakhstan tend to support this conclusion. In 1993 total emigration from Kazakhstan exceeded total immigration by 222,000<sup>89</sup>, but ethnic Kazakh immigration exceeded emigration by 23,500<sup>90</sup>. Even in 1994, the year of highest net emigration from Kazakhstan, Kazakh immigrants exceeded Kazakh emigrants by 2,406.<sup>91</sup> The trend continued in later years. In the first nine months of 1996 Kazakh immigrants (12,227) exceeded Kazakh emigrants (7,173) by 5,074, though in the same period of 1997 Kazakh emigrants (9,113) slightly exceeded immigrants (8,586).<sup>92</sup> In practice since independence more Kazakhs immigrated to Kazakhstan, than emigrated from there. If migration flows to and from Kazakhstan were determined exclusively by economic reasons, one would not expect to find more Kazakhs

<sup>87</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Komitet po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyaziam s sootchestvennikami, Spravka o polozhenii v Kazakhstane, Moscow [No publisher] 1995.

<sup>88</sup> The survey took place in 8 cities - Almaty, Atirau, Balikshi, Mamlutk, Petropavlovsk, Talgar, Turkestan, Shymkent, and involved 1061 Kazakh and 1118 Russian respondents. It was financed by US Science Foundation, Carnegie Corporation and MacArthur Foundation. [Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiei E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, pp. 275, 291-292].

<sup>89</sup> Federal'naya Migratsionnaya Sluzhba Rossii, O rabote Migratsionnoy sluzhby posol'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii v Respublike Kazakhstan v 1994 godu, Doc. No.722, Moscow [No publisher] 13.04.95, pp. 3-4.

<sup>90</sup> Galiev, A., Etnodemograficheskie i etnomigratsionnyye protsessy v Kazakhstane // Evraziyskoye soobshchestvo: ekonomika, politika, bezopasnost', No.2, 1995, p. 61.

<sup>91</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Komitet po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyaziam s sootchestvennikami, Spravka o polozhenii v Kazakhstane, Moscow [No publisher] 1995.

<sup>92</sup> The information was provided by Merhat Sharipzhan from RFE/RL Kazakh Broadcasting Service with reference to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Bureau in Akmola and Kazakh State Agency on Statistics.



going to Kazakhstan than leaving. If the economic situation had a relatively stronger negative impact on Russians and other non-Kazakhs there must have been reasons for it.

Although massive, Russian emigration affected primarily only one group within the Russian population of Kazakhstan, namely Russians born in Russia, who migrated to Kazakhstan for various, mostly professional/career, reasons. They have high average educational and qualification levels and live in cities, in many of which they are the majority of the population. This group is most disposed to emigration, because it has the fewest local ties, and the highest proportion of qualifications marketable elsewhere. There is, however, a second group, larger than the first (66.6% of all Russians in Kazakhstan), consisting of Russians whose ancestors have lived in Kazakhstan for two-three generations. They live mostly in rural areas, and in the north-west, north and north-east regions, and are far less likely to emigrate than members of the first group; although two-thirds of Kazakhstan's Russian population, they are only one-third of Russian emigrants from there.<sup>93</sup> The sociological survey by the Information and Analytical Centre of Kazakhstan's Parliament showed that intending migrants formed 23% of urban but only 7% of rural populations.<sup>94</sup> Most conspicuous within the second group are Cossacks. Migration among them is negligible, and mostly of young men going to serve in the Russian armed forces.<sup>95</sup>

Another important conclusion that can be drawn from the various surveys is that most Russians intend to stay in Kazakhstan. The July 1994 sociological survey mentioned above established that throughout Kazakhstan only 25% of Russians contemplate emigration.<sup>96</sup> The survey performed by the group of American researchers in December 1994 established that only 20.8% of Russians see their future in emigration, while 36% of Russians indicated definite intent to stay in Kazakhstan and fight to preserve the Russian language and culture. Another 4.5% declared their intention to organise themselves politically for secession of the Russian-populated lands from Kazakhstan.<sup>97</sup>

Self-organisation of the second group of the Russian population started even before the disintegration of the USSR, and Kazakhstan's policy of nation-state building intensified the process, with the Cossacks taking the lead. Their

<sup>93</sup> Federal'naya Migratsionnaya Sluzhba Rossii, O rabote Migratsionnoy sluzhby posol'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii v Respublike Kazakhstan v 1994 godu, Doc. No.722, Moscow [No publisher] 13.04.95, pp. 15-16; Rybakovskiy, L., Migratsionnyy obmen naseleniem mezhdru Tsentral'noy Azii i Rossiei // Rossiya i musulmanskiy mir, Bulletin' referativno-analiticheskoy informatsii, No.12(42), Moscow: INION, 1995, p. 37.

<sup>94</sup> Arsenov, M., Kalmykov, S., Sovremennaya yazikovaya situatsiya v Respublike Kazakhstan // Politika (Almaty), No.1, 1995, p. 49.

<sup>95</sup> Federal'naya Migratsionnaya Sluzhba Rossii, O rabote Migratsionnoy sluzhby posol'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii v Respublike Kazakhstan v 1994 godu, Doc. No.722, Moscow [No publisher] 13.04.95, pp. 15-16.

<sup>96</sup> Arsenov, M., Kalmykov, S., Sovremennaya yazikovaya situatsiya v Respublike Kazakhstan // Politika (Almaty), No.1, 1995, p. 49.

<sup>97</sup> Other respondents named different modes of behaviour or had difficulties in answering the question. [Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiei E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, p. 277].

organisations started to emerge even before the collapse of the USSR, and were followed by other sections of the Russian community. On 24 September 1992 a founding conference of a new Russian organisation, the Republican Public Slavic Movement "Lad" (Concord) was held in Petropavlovsk. Lad's statute defined its objectives as "preservation of the ethnic uniqueness, culture and languages of the Slavs, spiritual revival of the Slavic people of the Republic of Kazakhstan, developing and strengthening of democracy, realisation and defence of political economic, social and cultural rights and freedoms, strengthening of peace and friendship, fraternal relations between peoples of our multinational republic".<sup>98</sup> On 28 May 1993 Lad received official registration and a year later, according to its leader A. Dokuchaeva, had 25,000 members.<sup>99</sup> Lad's activities had a clear political direction, though formally it continued presenting itself as a purely cultural organisation, a tactic applied to overcome restrictions on political organisations of ethnic Russians.

In November 1992 another Russian community organisation, Russian Centre, was launched in Alma-Ata. It was based on the Russian Cultural Centre there and Slavic cultural societies in the 17 provinces. Its declared aims were to help the Slav population through the transition to the market economy, and ensure that Slavs stayed in Kazakhstan.<sup>100</sup> It was headed by N. Sidorova. The importance of these two new organisations, was that they were not directly linked to the Cossack movement, and served as points of consolidation for the non-Cossack Russian and general Slav community in Kazakhstan.

On 7 December 1992 Russian community organisations staged a 15,000-strong rally in Ust-Kamenogorsk, demanding that Kazakhstan's Supreme Soviet and President restore the political and economic integrity of peoples of the CIS countries. The resolution it adopted requested recognition of Russian as the second state language, and of dual citizenship for residents in the republic, and that the East Kazakhstan provincial authorities be granted "right of self-government in the spheres of language, culture and exploitation of natural resources". They threatened to call "a general political strike and recall the deputies representing the province" if their demands were not met. I. Korbanev, a co-chairman of the Slavic Culture Society in East Kazakhstan province, warned that if the parliament refused to consider the demands, the society could raise the issue of forming a Trans-Irtysh republic<sup>101</sup>, an obvious analogy with the Transdnestria Republic in Moldova. When asked about the rally in an interview Nazarbayev dismissed it as of "secondary importance", and warned that public actions by Russians in Kazakhstan could meet with a similar response by Kazakhs.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Ustav Respublikanskogo Obshchestvennogo Slavyanskogo Dvizheniya "Lad" // Zaslavskaya, M., *Politicheskie partii i obshchestvennyye ob'edineniya Kazakhstana na sovremennom etape razvitiya*, Almaty: KISI, 1994, pp. 217-219.

<sup>99</sup> Zaslavskaya, M., *Politicheskie partii i obshchestvennyye ob'edineniya Kazakhstana na sovremennom etape razvitiya*, Almaty: KISI, 1994, p. 32.

<sup>100</sup> Russian Organisation Launched in Alma-Ata, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 27.11.92.

<sup>101</sup> Slavs in East Kazakhstan Threaten Secession, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 09.12.92.

<sup>102</sup> Nazarbayev Answers Viewers' Questions on TV Phone-in, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 11.12.92.

The implementation of de-russification in Kazakhstan did not go unnoticed in Moscow. Probably the first Russian expert to voice concern was A. Migranyan, one of Yeltsin's political advisers. He argued that Kazakhstan's declared support for closer integration with Russia was not a long-term strategy, but a tactic to gain time. The important point in his deliberation was that he concentrated not on the immediate negative economic effects of the large Russian immigration from Kazakhstan, but on future strategic relationships between the two countries.<sup>103</sup> The immigration was disadvantageous for the Russian economy, but only temporarily. Russia was after all large enough to accommodate all Russians leaving Kazakhstan without overstraining itself, and Migranyan well understood that.

What would be Kazakhstan's attitude towards Russia in a strategic perspective, would it remain friendly and allied, or make a geopolitical shift and join forces hostile to Russia, creating a serious danger to Russian national security? These were the questions that troubled Russian foreign policy analysts at the time. Moscow obviously saw the presence of a large Russian community in Kazakhstan, and its wide representation in government, public service and major industries as insurance of Kazakhstan's loyalty in strategic perspective. The attitude to ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan became the main criterion by which the real and not declared intentions of Kazakh leadership were judged. Russia's primary concern was, firstly, to encourage Russians not to leave Kazakhstan, and secondly, to force the Kazakh leaders to restore the role of ethnic Russian in state institutions.

On 30 November 1992 Yeltsin issued an executive order "On Questions of Protection of Rights and Interests of Russian Citizens beyond the Borders of the Russian Federation", which had direct implications for Kazakhstan. Among other things the document instructed the Foreign Ministry to be more active in defending "Russian citizens and their interests" abroad, and also authorised the Foreign Ministry and State Committee on Economic Cooperation with CIS states "to consider questions of economic relations with republics of the former USSR, depending on their observance of human rights in accordance with universally accepted norms and principles of international law".<sup>104</sup> Thus Moscow established a direct linkage between treatment of ethnic Russians in other republics and Russia's economic relations with these republics. Given Russia's economic dominance in the post-Soviet space, this was tantamount to authorising the use of economic pressure against recalcitrant republics.

One method chosen by Moscow for exercising political pressure on Kazakhstan was providing political and diplomatic support for Russian community activists and organisations, especially in cases of persecution by the Kazakh authorities. The first such episode occurred on 12 April 1994, when Boris Suprunyuk, chief editor of the independent newspaper "Glas", was arrested in Petropavlovsk. A massive media campaign in his defence was accompanied by

<sup>103</sup> Megapolis-Express, 28.10.92.

<sup>104</sup> Rasporuyazhenie Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii o voprosakh zashchity prav i interesov rossiyskikh grazhdan za predelami Rossiyskoy Federatsii // Diplomaticeskii Vestnik, No.1-2, 1993, p. 8.

rallies and threatening statements by Russian patriotic organisations directed at the Kazakh authorities.<sup>105</sup>

The Russian authorities also acted decisively. The Russian Embassy in Almaty sent diplomatic notes on 12 and 21 April requesting consular access to Suprunyuk, but Kazakhstan's Foreign Ministry ignored them. Following the failure of the Embassy's demarches, the Duma Committee on CIS Affairs and Ties with Compatriots issued a special statement which said that the Kazakh authorities' actions "grossly violated" international human rights norms and the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance. The Committee expressed "deep concern that such practices with regard to Kazakhstan's Russians may complicate bilateral relations between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan", and appealed to the Kazakh authorities to take steps to settle the situation and "inform state bodies of the Russian Federation about their actions with regard to Russian Federation citizen Suprunyuk and other Kazakhstan Russians in custody".<sup>106</sup>

At the Duma hearings on Russian-Kazakhstan relations, Deputy Foreign Minister Panov revealed that the Duma resolution had been arranged at the Russian Foreign Ministry's request.<sup>107</sup> This refutes the well-established misconception that there were some differences of principle between the Russian parliament and Yeltsin's administration over protection of ethnic Russians in the post-Soviet states. This is further confirmed by another disclosure by Panov, that "a practice of communicating through confidential letters" had been established between Yeltsin and Nazarbayev, that when difficult questions arose, they wrote to each other, and "issues such as that of the Cossacks were touched on more than once in letters which Boris Nikolayevich sent to Nazarbayev".<sup>108</sup> So, while keeping silent publicly, Yeltsin expressed his concern to Nazarbayev through diplomatic channels. In the Suprunyuk case Mikitayev acted as Yeltsin's personal envoy, and allegedly passed a personal message from Yeltsin to Nazarbayev.<sup>109</sup> Suprunyuk was released by the end of May.

In similar later episodes, the Russian Government acted along the same lines. This was in the case when in late October 1994 F.Cherepanov, acting Ataman of the East Kazakhstan province Cossacks, was kidnapped in Ust-Kamenogorsk.<sup>110</sup> The Russian Foreign Ministry registered dissatisfaction, and demanded the Kazakh side take all necessary steps to free Cherepanov.<sup>111</sup> The

<sup>105</sup> Leader of Russian Community Arrested in Northern Kazakhstan, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 19.04.94.

<sup>106</sup> Zayavlenie Komiteta Gosudarstvennoy Dumy po delam SNG i svyaziam s sootchestvennikami v svyazi s arestom grazhdanina Rossiyskoy Federatsii B.F.Suprunyuka 12 aprelya 1994 g. v g. Petropavlovsk, Moscow [No publisher] 1994.

<sup>107</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyaziam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, p. 12.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>109</sup> Problems Remain in Russo-Kazakh Citizenship Accord, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 31.05.97.

<sup>110</sup> Reuters News Service, 01.11.94.

<sup>111</sup> Reuters News Service, 03.11.94.

arrest of Gunkin, Ataman of the Semirechye Cossacks, on 28 October 1995 aroused a similar reaction. In a letter to Kazakhstan's National Security Committee, the Russian Ministry for Nationalities Affairs and Regional Policy said that the Russian public saw Gunkin's arrest as "an attempt to hold elections to the Kazakh parliament without considering the interests of Kazakhstan's Russian-speaking population".<sup>112</sup> On 17 November the Duma adopted a resolution supporting Gunkin, and expressing concern at "the violation of rights and freedoms of both ethnic Russians and Russian citizens in Kazakhstan".<sup>113</sup> When despite these protests Gunkin was jailed for three months, the Russian Foreign Ministry expressed its disappointment.<sup>114</sup> Gunkin served his full three-month sentence, and after release was re-elected as Ataman.<sup>115</sup>

Russia also foresaw more active utilisation of Cossack organisations to put psychological pressure on the Kazakh authorities. In early August 1992 a meeting of Cossack atamans from all over Russia was held in Moscow. Rutskey spoke there in favour of restoring Cossack units in the Russian armed forces, and announced that the Russian leadership had decided to draft a special program to do with Cossack Force and frontier guard units. Speaking about the position of ethnic Russians in the CIS states, he especially mentioned Kazakhstan. "Despite Nazarbayev's rhetoric about internationalism, Kazakhstan's cabinet is adopting decrees barring citizens from certain jobs if they do not speak the Kazakh language... We cannot just sit back and watch the growth of national chauvinism and discrimination against ethnic Russians in the former union republics. In such a situation we must assume a tough position and take measures to prevent such discrimination".<sup>116</sup> After the meeting Abdildin, Chairman of Kazakhstan's Supreme Soviet, registered his dissatisfaction, stating in a newspaper article that the Cossack atamans' claims to autonomy to protect the interests of the Russian population in Kazakhstan were a provocation, fraught with risk of conflicts.<sup>117</sup>

On 15 March 1993 Yeltsin signed a decree ordering reorganisation of Russian military structures in North Caucasus. The decree *inter alia* provided for organisation of Cossack units in the army, internal troops and security forces, and creation of special departments within the Defence, Interior and Security ministries to supervise such units. Local authorities in traditional Cossack regions were instructed to form Cossack "voluntary non-military structures" which, however, were to be used for "civil and territorial defence" as well as ensuring law and order

<sup>112</sup> Russia Concerned over Arrest of Cossack Chieftain in Kazakhstan, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 16.11.95.

<sup>113</sup> Duma Voices Concern over Human Rights in Kazakhstan, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 20.11.95.

<sup>114</sup> Cossack Chief Sentenced to Three Months in Prison, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 23.11.95; Russia Expresses Regret at Court Sentence on Cossack Chief, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 23.11.95.

<sup>115</sup> *Opasnost' zaklyuchaetsya ne v voyne a v samoobmane, kotoryy opravdyvaet nereshitelnost' rossiyskoy vlasti, // Shturm, No.3, 1996, p. 31.*

<sup>116</sup> Cossack Council of Atamans ends session in Moscow, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 17.08.92

<sup>117</sup> Cossack Atamans' Claims to Autonomy in Kazakhstan are a "Provocation", BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 15.08.92.

and protecting property.<sup>118</sup> Almaty's reaction to this decree was painful. A lengthy article in the Kazakh language weekly *Orken* (Horizon) said that Yeltsin's decision could hardly be regarded as a purely Russian domestic affair, and that it had a direct bearing on the situation in Kazakhstan.<sup>119</sup>

The Cossacks were definitely much more prepared for action than other sections of Kazakhstan's Russian community. A public opinion survey among Russians found that only 17.7% were prepared to take up arms "to defend the interests of their people in inter-ethnic conflicts", whereas 42.9% of Cossacks were so prepared.<sup>120</sup> In some regions Cossacks have already created shadow structures for organisational deployment in crises. For example, in 1993 Cossacks in northern Kazakhstan divided their territory into 20 Cossack settlements, and formed illegal committees to govern them.<sup>121</sup> According to Kazakh sources, unregistered Cossack associations exist in Akmola, East Kazakhstan, Kokchetau, North Kazakhstan and West Kazakhstan provinces.<sup>122</sup>

In March 1994 several villages in Taldy-Kurgan province became an area of sharp confrontation between Kazakhs and local Cossacks, with occasional clashes taking place, and a larger encounter averted only through police intervention. In April 1994 the Russian Justice Ministry registered the Siberian Cossack Force. Four of its 16 subdivisions were located in Kazakhstan.<sup>123</sup> In November 1994 Russian Cossacks started creating an Ural Cossack Force in Orenburg province with headquarters in the town of Tashla. The Force was to include Cossacks living in West-Kazakhstan.<sup>124</sup>

Not surprisingly, Cossacks in Kazakhstan became the primary target of attacks by the Kazakh authorities, preventing registration of Cossack organisations, and denying them the right to hold public meeting, rallies and demonstrations. Cossack activists were subjected to regular police harassment, detention and arrest. But the Kazakh authorities soon realised that the Cossack movement could not be contained by repression alone, and moved to a more flexible approach. The first signs of this appeared in March 1994, when State Counsellor to the President Suleymenov proposed convening a republican congress

<sup>118</sup> Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii o reformirovanii voennykh struktur pogranichnykh i vnutrennykh voysk na territorii Severo-Kavkazskogo regiona Rossiyskoy Federatsii i gosudarsvennoy podderzhke kazachestva, No. 341, Moscow [No publisher], 15.03.93.

<sup>119</sup> Yeltsin Decree on Cossacks Sparks off More Debate on Attitudes to Russia, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 17.04.93.

<sup>120</sup> Abdirrov, M., Abdirrova B., Kazachestvo v kontekste sovremennykh kazakhstansko-rossiyskikh otnosheniy // Kazakhstan i mirovoe soobshchestvo, No. 2(3), 1995, p. 59.

<sup>121</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiei E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, p. 209.

<sup>122</sup> Ayaganov, B., Kuandikov, A., Baymagambetov, S., Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya v Kazakhstane: regional'nyy opyt, // Evraziyskoe Soobshchestvo, No.4-5, 1995, p. 7.

<sup>123</sup> RFE/RL Report No.67, 08.04.94; Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiei E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, p. 210.

<sup>124</sup> Ayaganov, B., Kuandikov, A., Baymagambetov, S., Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya v Kazakhstane: regional'nyy opyt, // Evraziyskoe Soobshchestvo, No.4-5, 1995, p. 7; Abdirrov, M., Abdirrova B., Kazachestvo v kontekste sovremennykh kazakhstansko-rossiyskikh otnosheniy // Kazakhstan i mirovoe soobshchestvo, No. 2(3), 1995, p. 59.

in Almaty of all Cossack formations and communities, to discuss the official status of Kazakhstan's Cossacks.<sup>125</sup> Historians M. Abdirov and B. Abdirova recommended drafting a program of "cultural revival" of the Cossacks, encouraging creation of Cossack "cultural funds", specific business activities (protection of fish resources, struggle against poaching etc), holding Cossack festivals, folklore celebrations, etc".<sup>126</sup> The authors advised a logical combination of this policy with harsh measures against recalcitrant Cossack organisations: a "carrot and stick" tactic. The core of the policy was to channel the Cossack movement into a direction innocuous for the Kazakh nation-state, by finding a base among Cossacks who would be satisfied with access to economic and cultural benefits and other incentives.

On 1 June 1994 the Kazakh authorities registered the Society for Assistance to the Semirechye Cossacks, which brought together Cossacks from the Almaty and Taldy-Kurgan provinces of eastern Kazakhstan. While registering it, Justice Ministry officials stressed that it should not be regarded as a military-style formation. However, State Counsellor Suleymenov said that it might be possible for Cossack troops to serve on the borders with China, Iran and the Caspian Sea, and that a Cossack platoon might be raised for Kazakhstan's Republican Guards, and suggested that the Kazakhstan Cossacks create a multi-ethnic movement similar to Cossack groups in Russia, which include Kalmyks and Osetians.<sup>127</sup> The purpose of this manoeuvre was clearly to DILUTE the Cossack movement's ethnic character and pro-Russian orientation. But following the kidnapping of Cherepanov, the society showed that it was in no-one's pocket. On 19 November it staged a demonstration and rally in the centre of Almaty, after which it was suspended and some Cossack activists arrested.<sup>128</sup>

The most explosive situation pertaining to ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan emerged in November 1993, when Moscow left the rouble zone, and refused Kazakhstan and other Central Asian states fresh deliveries of Russian currency. Russian-Kazakh relations hit their lowest point since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Tension was in the air, with rumours of possible anti-Russian violence in Central Asia. In this electrified atmosphere Deputy Prime Minister Shokhin, on behalf of the Russian government, issued a strong warning to Central Asian nationalists that Russia would find ways to defend ethnic Russians.<sup>129</sup> Shokhin's

<sup>125</sup> Kazakhstan's Cossacks to Meet to Discuss Status, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 29.03.94.

<sup>126</sup> Abdirov, M., Abdirova B., *Kazachestvo v kontekste sovremennykh kazakhstansko-rossiyskikh otnosheniy* // *Kazakhstan i mirovye soobshchestva*, No. 2(3), 1995, p. 62.

<sup>127</sup> Cossack Group Given Official Status by Kazakh Authorities, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 12.07.94.

<sup>128</sup> Kazakh Justice Minister Suspends Cossack Society, Rutskoy Alleges Discrimination, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 08.12.94.

<sup>129</sup> On 16 November 1993 Shokhin's statement was published in the semi-official newspaper *Izvestiya*. It said: "In the past few days, in connection with the problems of creating a new rouble zone, threats have been spread around in some former Soviet republics to the effect that Russia should again assume a considerable share of the expense of improving their financial situation, or else things will go especially badly for ethnic Russians who live in those republics. This kind of blackmail can hardly be serious, but such irresponsible statements cannot be ignored..."

statement was echoed by other senior Russian officials, including Foreign Minister Kozyrev.<sup>130</sup>

The statements provoked angry reactions in Kazakhstan, and Nazarbayev did not hesitate in an interview to show his displeasure by drawing a parallel with Nazi Germany's march into Czechoslovakia's German-speaking Sudetenland in 1938. "When they talk about protecting people who are not citizens of Russia but of Kazakhstan I recall the times of Hitler, who started with "protecting" the Sudeten Germans", he said.<sup>131</sup> Yeltsin was worried enough to dispatch Kozyrev at once on a tour of Central Asia. He arrived in Almaty from Uzbekistan on 16 November 1993, but Nazarbayev claimed to be unwell, and refused to see him. Instead Kozyrev, conspicuously accompanied by First Deputy Defence Minister General B. Gromov, held talks with Foreign Minister Suleymenov, and was also received by Prime Minister Tereshchenko, to whom he handed a memorandum on the situation of Russians in Kazakhstan listing the issues that caused concern: language policy, problems of Cossacks, personnel policy, the situation in education and culture, and the status of Russian military personnel.<sup>132</sup> After the meeting Kozyrev told journalists Russia's position in favour of dual citizenship remained unchanged.<sup>133</sup>

The last thing the Russian government needed at that time was an inter-ethnic war in Kazakhstan. Such a war would have placed Russia in a very difficult international situation. Internal political pressures would have made it impossible not to intervene on behalf of the Russian community, but such intervention would have inevitably caused international outrage and plunged Russia into political and economic isolation. Even if the intervention succeeded, the geopolitical advantages for Russia would be most dubious. Annexation of northern Kazakhstan would leave southern Kazakhstan under the control of anti-Russian forces, gravitating towards Islamic fundamentalism, and creating a permanent security threat to Russia's southern borders.

Hence simultaneously with strongly-worded statements targeting the Kazakh and other Central Asian elites, Moscow did its best to diminish tension. During his visit to Kazakhstan in December 1993 Prime Minister Chernomyrdin, at a joint press conference with Tereshchenko on 25 December, said he had discussed the problem of the Russian population with Nazarbayev. He also stressed that leaders of certain Russian political parties had "made irresponsible remarks, concerning especially the Russian community in Kazakhstan, and not only in Kazakhstan", and continued "this I do not want, and it cannot be identified as government policy, or the policy of the President... Russia does not want to foment

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Russia has sufficient means of responding to bullying methods of "people's diplomacy" to make the "architects" of this policy regret it. And there is no need to harp on the old ideological theme of "imperialist practices" - Russia can and will defend its current interests". [Izvestiya, 16.11.93].

<sup>130</sup> Izvestiya, 16.11.93.

<sup>131</sup> Reuters News Service, 26.11.93.

<sup>132</sup> Megapolis-Express, 02.02.94.

<sup>133</sup> Russian Foreign Minister Visits, Discusses Cooperation And Tajikistan, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 19.11.93.



inter-ethnic tensions, especially by using the Russian-speaking community... I want to use this opportunity to address the Russian-speaking community of Kazakhstan. Don't listen to irresponsible declarations".<sup>134</sup> According to the Russian Federal Migration Service, in 1994 Russia's embassy in Kazakhstan concentrated its efforts "primarily on mitigating the inter-ethnic situation in the country, calming the Russian population and reducing its exodus from Kazakhstan".<sup>135</sup>

Nazarbayev also took steps to diminish tensions. In early January 1994 he announced that he had passed to Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin a draft treaty on basic principles relating to Kazakh and Russian Federation citizenship, in which the contracting parties pledged to adopt without delay legislation establishing a simplified procedure for acquisition of citizenship by Kazakhs and Russians, under which applications must be considered within six months of submission. In addition, the signatories would pledge to enact legislation permitting their citizens to serve in each others' armed forces under contract. However, Nazarbayev indicated that he was not at that point prepared to make any concessions on language matters.<sup>136</sup>

The primary purpose of Nazarbayev's announcement was domestic policy considerations. With parliamentary elections imminent (scheduled for 7 March 1994), the ethnic divide in Kazakhstan had become only too obvious. The major differences between the parties and organisations representing the Russian and Kazakh communities remained unchanged - language, citizenship and fair representation in government structures. With his proposal on citizenship Nazarbayev clearly wanted to play up a little to the concerns of ethnic Russians, not to antagonise them more before the elections, and probably to secure some of their votes for his party's candidates, who would appear moderate compared to the radical Kazakh nationalists. For the Russian community, Kazakhstan's first post-Soviet elections were a chance to shift the balance of power in the republic's leadership somewhat in their favour. But as was shown above, they failed, due to undemocratic electoral practices.

Zatulín headed the Russian parliamentary delegation which visited Almaty on 6-9 March to observe the elections. His report, addressed to Duma Speaker Rybkin, contained the following conclusions and recommendations.

1. "Results of the visit allow for an unpleasant conclusion about the state of the Russian community, Russian ethnic and cultural societies and organisations. At present internationalist interests in Kazakhstan are much better expressed by Kazakh public and political figures and academics of democratic orientation (O.Suleimenov, N.Masanov), and not by the leaders of the Russian community, who are little known beyond their own circle... National leaders of the Russian

<sup>134</sup> Russian Premier Calls on Ethnic Russians Not to Heed Provocation, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 30.12.93.

<sup>135</sup> Federal'naya Migratsionnaya Sluzhba Rossii, O rabote Migratsionnoy sluzhby posol'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii v Respublike Kazakhstan v 1994 godu, Doc. No.722, Moscow [No publisher] 13.04.95, p. 6.

<sup>136</sup> Nezavisimaya gazeta, 06.01.94.

population in Kazakhstan do not exist, though there are undoubtedly grounds for raising them”.

2. “Unfortunately, Russia has not yet demonstrated a well-conceived policy which would allow it to exercise far-reaching influence on the situation inside Kazakhstan. We think that part of the responsibility for this must be attributed to officials of the Government of the Russian Federation, none of whom has yet once met representatives of the Russian population of Kazakhstan”. The report gave as an example Russian Minister for Culture Sidorov, who ignored Russian community organisations when opening the “Days of Russian Culture” in Almaty.

3. “Not trying to disavow altogether the results of the elections to Kazakhstan’s parliament, in future we should concentrate on stressing its temporary, transitional nature”.

4. “At inter-state level the questions of dual citizenship and status of the Russian language as second state language must be kept open. Negotiations that have taken place indicate that among the leaders of Kazakhstan there is not full confidence that they did not overshoot the mark, at least on the Russian language issue. However, without coordinated pressure from inside and outside Kazakhstan, no decision putting the Russian language on an equal footing with Kazakh can be taken, because Russian deputies in the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Kazakhstan are, as a rule, filtered through representatives of the local population, whose political task is formulated by the republic’s leadership. Meanwhile, without demonstrating will to resist on the issue of language (or dual citizenship), further degradation of Russians in Kazakhstan’s political life will continue”.

5. “Under the emerging trend for ousting Russian and the all-democratic opposition closely connected to it, the possibility of build-up of an explosive political potential in Kazakhstan’s northern provinces cannot be excluded. It seems to us that a request to allow Kazakhstan’s northern provinces to establish direct economic links with the adjacent regions of Russia is exceptionally important, and can be justified before the Kazakh side itself. Maintaining and strengthening mutual economic integration of these provinces is the best guarantee of loyalty of Kazakhstan and its ruling circles, who have an interest in territorial integrity”.

6. “We should take measures, including demonstrative ones, of support for Russian-speaking ethnic and cultural organisations and Cossacks in Kazakhstan. There is no other way to develop their capabilities, other than doing what we can to render them assistance. We regard the position of the Russian Embassy in Kazakhstan as absolutely correct in this respect. The Kazakhstan leadership’s initial negative reaction needs to be outlived and overcome. They are politically and economically incapable of developing a real confrontation with declared Russian interests”.

7. “Russia’s indubitable objective in relation to Kazakhstan is its further integration, closer union with Russia in comparison to the CIS... And if Russia today is not yet fully prepared for integration with Kazakhstan, everything

necessary should be done not to exclude such a development in the foreseeable future".<sup>137</sup>

Zatulín's report contained what can be described as a Russian centrist view on future strategy towards Kazakhstan. His conclusions and recommendations found reflection in subsequent Russian policy, which was directed not at partitioning Kazakhstan on ethnic lines and incorporating its 'northern territories' into the Russian state, but gradually and gently drawing the whole of Kazakhstan into a closer relationship with Russia, with a long-term prospect of incorporating it into a new form of union or confederation. For this purpose both external and internal pressure on the Kazakh authorities would be exercised, envisaging in the longer run the removal of Nazarbayev's nationalist regime. Kazakhstan's Russian community and democratic, internationalist movements and parties among Kazakhs would be used to exert such pressure from within. In line with this strategy would be a course of strengthening Russian organisations in Kazakhstan and facilitating their acquiring a larger share of political power.<sup>138</sup>

Widespread criticism of Kazakhstan's parliamentary elections, from both within and without, coupled with the new strains in inter-ethnic relations which the elections had introduced into the republic's political life, weakened Nazarbayev politically. This probably explains his desire to achieve some compromises with Russia. In late March 1994 he went to Moscow with a package of proposals to smooth the negative political attitudes to his regime that were developing in the Russian government and Russian public opinion. They included a number of military and strategic matters important to the Russian defence establishment, and a proposal to create a Eurasian Union of states to replace CIS, intended to appeal broadly to the Russian public in both Russia and Kazakhstan. However, he managed to avoid any concessions of principle on the rights of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan, a question of primary importance for his strategy of building a Kazakh nation-state. The only document on this issue which Nazarbayev and Yeltsin signed was the Memorandum on Basic Principles of Resolving Issues Related to Citizenship and Legal Status of Citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Permanently Residing in the Russian Federation, and Citizens of the Russian Federation, Permanently Residing in the Republic of Kazakhstan, of 28 March 1994.

The memorandum acknowledged the importance of soonest possible settlement of questions related to "citizenship and legal status of citizens of one state... on the territory of the other". Both parties agreed to resolve these questions through a simplified procedure for granting citizenship; ensuring equality of rights of permanent residents with local citizens, with some agreed exemptions; guaranteeing each other's permanent residents the right to own, use and dispose of

<sup>137</sup> Zatulín, K., *Otchet ob itogakh poezdki gruppy deputatov Federal'nogo Sobraniya, nablyudavshikh za vyborami v Verkhovniy Sovet Respubliki Kazakhstan*, Doc. No.316/333, Moscow [No publisher] 01.04.94, pp. 1-3.

<sup>138</sup> Some liberal Duma members expressed concern about such kind of policies. For example, A.Arbatov condemned what he called "Monroe Doctrine" approach, stressing that Russia should not seek special role in the CIS. "...It is one thing to protect "near abroad" and another is to long for domination", he said. [*Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnie otnosheniya*, No.7, 1994, p. 12]

their property in accordance with the legislation of the state of residence; to give citizens of one state the right to serve under contract in the other's armed forces; guaranteeing visa-free travel to each others' territory; maximum simplification of customs procedures for citizens travelling between the two countries.<sup>139</sup> Though these provisions addressed practical issues very important for Russia, they were still only a declaration of intent, and not a very precise one. The memorandum did not reflect the major Russian interest, dual citizenship, but neither did it exclude it from the agenda for further negotiations. It instructed the foreign ministries of both states to produce a draft agreement on the subject within a month.

In May 1994 Almaty was visited by a Russian delegation led by Mikitayev. Its main purpose was to discuss citizenship issues. The talks once again failed to resolve Russian-Kazakhstan contradictions. Almaty still did not accept dual citizenship, while Moscow tried to keep it on the agenda.<sup>140</sup> However, after returning to Moscow Mikitayev was optimistic. He said that an agreement regulating citizenship could be signed by Yeltsin and Nazarbayev as early as in June or July 1994, and that Russia was still hoping to persuade Kazakhstan to agree to dual citizenship.<sup>141</sup>

Behind Russian insistence on Kazakhstan's acceptance of the principle of "dual citizenship" was a far-reaching political agenda, reflecting primarily strategic considerations, not human rights. Mikitayev was probably sincere in telling the Duma hearings on Russian-Kazakhstan relations that "dual citizenship is a bridge of friendship..., a confirmation that both states intend in future to live in friendship and fraternity".<sup>142</sup> Indeed, Kazakhstan's acceptance of the dual citizenship principle would be an insurance that the republic would stay strategically bound to Moscow, because almost half of its citizens would simultaneously be Russian citizens. Besides, the issue of protecting Russian citizens in Kazakhstan could serve as a justification for Moscow applying economic and political or even military pressure against Kazakhstan. Considering Russia's and the Soviet Union's past records on human rights, it would be much easier for Moscow to justify any such action not in terms of defending human rights, which would lack credibility, but in terms of protecting its citizens. On the other hand, Almaty's awareness of a possibility of a Russian action in defence of its citizens would definitely deter Kazakhstan from any steps in international relations which could endanger vital Russian interests.

<sup>139</sup> Memorandum ob osnovnykh printsipakh resheniya voprosov, svyazannykh s grazhdanstvom i pravovym statusom grazhdan Respubliki Kazakhstan, postoyanno prozhivaiuschikh na territorii Rossiyskoy Federatsii, I grazhdan Rossiyskoy Federatsii, postoyanno prozhivaiuschikh na territorii Respubliki Kazakhstan // Kazakhstansko-Rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 160-161.

<sup>140</sup> Problems Remain in Russo-Kazakh Citizenship Accord, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 31.05.97.

<sup>141</sup> Problems Remain in Russo-Kazakh Citizenship Accord, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 31.05.97; Russia to Persuade Kazakhstan to Sign Dual Citizenship Agreement, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 02.06.94.

<sup>142</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyazyam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, p. 41.

The practical advantages dual citizenship could give to ethnic Russians living in Kazakhstan were mostly psychological. The present generation of ex-Soviets spent most of their lives under a regime which severely restricted the right to leave or enter the country. For ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan, dual citizenship does at least offer some chance that if Russia at some future date reimposes tight restrictions, and conditions in Kazakhstan become bad enough to make them want to leave, Russia will let them in. Some Russians, especially in southern Kazakhstan, may derive psychological comfort from awareness that Russian citizenship may entitle them to Russia's protection in case of inter-ethnic violence, which cannot be excluded, given such precedents as the civil war in Tajikistan and continuing instability on the Tajik-Afghan border.

Moscow's reasons for wanting dual citizenship were Almaty's reasons for rejecting it. Kazakhstan's experts produced a whole series of arguments against it. The main one was that it could affect the evolution of the young independent state, bringing "divided loyalties" into its life.<sup>143</sup> Another argument was that dual citizenship would place ethnic Russians in a privileged position compared to Kazakhs, and that would violate the basic constitutional principle of national equality. The argumentation also referred to technical difficulties arising from differences in national laws if applied to people with dual citizenship.<sup>144</sup> As often in diplomacy, these arguments concealed the basic issue: the Kazakh leadership saw dual citizenship as a major threat to the policy of nation-state building. Firstly, it would discourage Russian emigration. Secondly, it would augment Moscow's capabilities for interference in Kazakhstan's internal affairs. Thirdly, having 30-40% of foreign citizens would undermine the very basis of the nation-state.

The Kazakh authorities could not, of course, prevent ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan applying for Russian citizenship. But to do so would mean losing citizenship of Kazakhstan, and with it many of the social, economic and political rights enjoyed by citizens. This was highly discouraging, so applications for Russian citizenship came only from those who had already decided to emigrate, and were therefore of no further use for Russian strategy towards Kazakhstan. According to the Russian embassy in Almaty, in 1993 5,400 acquired Russian citizenship through it, but in 1994 the figure jumped to 53,000. Even this was few, given the size of the Russian community in Kazakhstan. Moreover, most of those who took Russian citizenship obviously emigrated, because the number of Russian citizens officially registered with the embassy as permanent residents remained very low, at 6,516.<sup>145</sup>

Given Moscow's and Almaty's diametrically opposite positions on dual citizenship, the negotiations on the issue went on for much longer than predicted by Mikitayev. The settlement took the form of two documents, A treaty and an

<sup>143</sup> RFE/RL Report No.224, 29.11.94.

<sup>144</sup> Kotov, A., *Edinoe grazhdanstvo - konstitutsionnaya osnova ravnopraviya v Respublike Kazakhstan* // *Politika* (Almaty), No.3, 1995, pp. 21-23.

<sup>145</sup> *Federal'naya Migratsionnaya Sluzhba Rossii, O rabote Migratsionnoy sluzhby posol'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii v Respublike Kazakhstan v 1994 godu*, Doc. No.722, Moscow [No publisher] 13.04.95, p. 7.

agreement, both signed on 20 January 1995 during Nazarbayev's visit to Moscow.<sup>146</sup> The treaty introduced a status of permanent resident for citizens of one country on the territory of the other. Permanent residents were entitled to the same rights as citizens, with some exceptions (Article 4). they could not vote or be elected to highest state positions or representational bodies; participate in universal voting; occupy positions in the diplomatic service, security bodies, or internal affairs bodies; in the central bodies of executive authority, as judges, or as procurators or as heads or deputy heads of regional, district, city, rural and settlement administrations.<sup>147</sup>

The treaty allowed permanent residents "to occupy positions as heads and deputy heads of structural subdivisions of regional, district, city, rural and settlement administrations, as well as of departments, directorates, committees and other organisations within the system of local bodies of executive authority", and "to possess, use, and dispose of property" belonging to them. Acquisition of new property by permanent residents was to be regulated by legislation of the party of residence. Permanent residents could "participate in privatisation of state property of the party of residence on an equal basis with its citizens, in accordance with legislation in effect in the party of residence"(Article 6).

The agreement said that the parties would afford each other's citizens arriving for permanent residence simplified procedure for acquisition of citizenship through registration.<sup>148</sup> It also established a time frame of three months for registering acquisition of citizenship. The agreement guaranteed permanent residents born in the territory of the other party, or whose parents were or had permanently resided in the territory of the other party, to freely chose citizenship of Russia or Kazakhstan within one year after the agreement came into force.<sup>149</sup> This provision covered a substantial number of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan, but by no means all of them. The agreement implied, though it did not state directly, that

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<sup>146</sup> Officially they were called "Treaty between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation on the Legal Status of Russian Federation Citizens Residing Permanently on the Territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and Citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan Residing Permanently on the Territory of Russian Federation" and "Agreement between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation on Simplifying the Procedure for Obtaining Citizenship by Citizens of the Russian Federation Arriving for Permanent Residence in Kazakhstan, and Citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan Arriving for Permanent Residence in the Russian Federation".

<sup>147</sup> *Dogovor mezhdru Respublikoy Kazakhstan i Rossiyskoy Federatsiiy o pravovom statuse grazhdan Rossiyskoy Federatsii, postoyanno prozhivaiuschikh na territorii Respubliki Kazakhstan, i grazhdan Respubliki Kazakhstan, postoyanno prozhivaiuschikh na territorii Rossiyskoy Federatsii // Kazakhstansko-Rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 216-221.*

<sup>148</sup> This applied in the following cases: "a) when the applicant was a citizen of the Kazakh SSR or RSFSR and simultaneously a USSR citizen in the past, resided in these territories as of 21st December 1991, and has been permanently residing there up to entry into force of this agreement; and/or b) when the applicant has close relatives who are citizens of the parties: husband (wife), parents (adoptive parents), children (including adopted children), sisters, brothers, grandfather or grandmother, permanently residing as citizens in the territory of the party of citizenship to be acquired".

<sup>149</sup> *Soglashenie mezhdru Respublikoy Kazakhstan i Rossiyskoy Federatsiiy ob uproshtchenom poryadke priobreteniya grazhdanstva grazhdanami Rossiyskoy Federatsii, pribyvaiuschimi dlya postoyannogo prozhivaniya v Respubliku Kazakhstan, i grazhdanami Respubliki Kazakhstan, pribyvaiuschimi dlya postoyannogo prozhivaniya v Rossiyskuyu Federatsiu // Kazakhstansko-Rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 221-224.*

acquisition of citizenship of one side entails relinquishing citizenship of the other. However, Russia managed to insert a provision which in principle would allow invalidation of this, at least by Russia.<sup>150</sup>

Overall, Russia failed to achieve its major goal - recognition by Kazakhstan of the principle of dual citizenship. This was a major setback for Moscow and victory for Nazarbayev. However, in combination the treaty and agreement contained a number of provisions which addressed essential interests of the Russian population. Both represented Russian attempts to create more favourable conditions for Russian citizens in Kazakhstan, without introducing the principle of dual citizenship. Moscow obviously hoped that improvement of the status of Russian citizens in Kazakhstan, codified in the agreements, would still encourage ethnic Russians to take up Russian citizenship but not emigrate. But even within the format of the agreement Russian diplomacy failed to achieve the maximum possible. Basically the regime stipulated in the agreements still discouraged ethnic Russians from accepting Russian citizenship without emigrating.

This was in fact admitted by the Russian executive bodies which took part in the negotiations. According to the RFMS, "documents on citizenship issues signed in Moscow on 20.01.95 do tackle the most pressing issues of ethnic Russians residing in Kazakhstan and their movements between the two states, but at present do not yet solve as such the problem of the Russian-speaking population of Kazakhstan".<sup>151</sup> In particular the RFMS pointed out that provisions on property ownership "extended to some degree" the administrative rights of Russians in Kazakhstan, "introduced more clarity" in their rights with regard to existing property, but "this document preserves the existing ban on Russian citizens acquiring property in Kazakhstan, putting them in this on the same level as other "foreigners".<sup>152</sup>

The Russian community in Kazakhstan was also unimpressed with the substance of both documents. In the opinion of Kazakhstan Supreme Soviet Deputy Golovkov, "the treaty confirmed existing limitations on the rights of Russian citizens residing permanently in Kazakhstan, and the agreement encouraged ethnic Russians to leave".<sup>153</sup> On 2 February 1995 the leaders of Russian community organisations - Lad (A.Dokuchaeva), Russian Commune (Yu.Bunakov), Russian Centre (N.Sidorova), Semirechye Cossack Force (N.Gunkin), and Russian members of the Kazakhstan parliament, S.Vasilieva, V.Galenko, A.Melnik, and N.Fomich, signed an appeal to the Russian Duma, calling on it not to ratify the agreements and to "continue working on solving

<sup>150</sup> Article 5 said that "if the domestic legislation of the parties establishes more advantageous conditions for acquisition of citizenship for a certain category of individuals, the domestic legislation of the parties is applied". Thus if Russia wanted to waive the requirement for relinquishment of Kazakhstan citizenship, it could do so.

<sup>151</sup> Federal'naya Migratsionnaya Sluzhba Rossii, O rabote Migratsionnoy sluzhby posol'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii v Respublike Kazakhstan v 1994 godu, Doc. No.722, Moscow [No publisher] 13.04.95, p. 11.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>153</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv i svyazam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, pp. 46.

issues of dual citizenship". They claimed that the agreements "only create an illusion of solving the citizenship issue". In conclusion they called on the Duma to unilaterally recognise the right to Russian citizenship for all Russians living in Kazakhstan in the same manner as Kazakhstan's constitution recognised the right for all Kazakhs living abroad.<sup>154</sup>

Concern was also voiced by some politicians in Moscow. At the Duma hearings on Russian-Kazakhstan relations Zatulin expressed doubts about both documents as seeming directed "as if to contribute to possible larger migration from Kazakhstan to Russia...". A.Dolgoplov, Chairman of a Subcommittee on Cossacks of the Duma Committee for CIS Affairs and Ties with Compatriots, stated that it was not clear to him whether the agreements were proof that the Kazakh side had made "a principled choice in favour of establishing close political, economic and military cooperation with Russia", or whether it was an attempt "secure by formal concessions and declarative agreements an attitude of the Russian people and government which would permit continuance in practice of the strategic line of ousting the Russian-speaking population from Kazakhstan".

These interpretations were rejected by Mikitayev, who said the agreements were designed to assist Russians in Kazakhstan to solve many acute problems,<sup>155</sup> and were a positive development because they "approximated" the rights of Russian citizens residing in Kazakhstan to those of citizens of Kazakhstan. Mikitayev called for speedy ratification of both agreements, and was supported by Deputy Foreign Minister Panov, who said they gave Russian citizens in Kazakhstan preferential status in comparison with other foreigners.<sup>156</sup> However both officials made it clear that the issue of dual citizenship remained on the agenda.<sup>157</sup> Despite the executive branch's strong support, the Duma delayed ratification for more than two years. Only on 26 June 1997 did Russia and Kazakhstan exchange instruments of ratification.<sup>158</sup>

In 1995 Nazarbayev took a number of steps to consolidate his personal power. On 11 March he dissolved parliament, then called a referendum on extending his term of office until the year 2000.<sup>159</sup> The purpose of his move was clear - to deprive the opposition of its only remaining source of influence on governmental policy, the parliament. This also meant that ethnic Russians might lose their only independent channel of political expression. Not surprisingly, Russian community organisations were swift to react. Lad, Russian Commune and

<sup>154</sup> Obrashenie k predsedatelyu fraktsii Agrarnoy Partii Rossii M.I. Lapshinu, Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 04.02.95, Moscow [no publisher] 1995.

<sup>155</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv i svyaziam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, pp. 39-40, 125.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., pp. 9, 24.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., pp. 18-19, 24-25, 41.

<sup>158</sup> Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 28.06.97.

<sup>159</sup> Nazarbayev's decision showed his particular dislike for contested elections. In the first presidential election in Kazakhstan on 1 December 1992 he was the only candidate.



some other organisations issued statements demanding new, free and fair parliamentary elections as soon as possible.<sup>160</sup> They received immediate support from the Russian Duma. On 13 March its Committee on CIS Affairs and Ties with Compatriots adopted a statement on "Political Crises in Kazakhstan", which expressed the hope for a new "free and democratic elections", and called for "more active participation in the legislative bodies by members of the Russian community".<sup>161</sup>

However, the referendum, held on 29 April, was conducted in a manner reminiscent of Soviet times. According to official Kazakh data the turnout was 91.3%, and 95.4% of those voting favoured extending Nazarbayev's term of office. Numerous polls taken beforehand had indicated that the turnout would not exceed 70%, and that 17 to 26% of those voting would vote against Nazarbayev.<sup>162</sup> If in March 1994 the authorities tried to win by unfair tactics, in 1995 they saved themselves the trouble. The results were simply decreed from above. Subsequent events with the referendum on the new constitution and elections to the new parliament proved this beyond doubt.

The referendum on the new constitution was held on 30 August, and, like its predecessor, delivered Soviet-style official results, claiming a 90% turnout and 89% approval of the new constitution. At a news conference in Almaty on 1 September, opposition organisations said the results had been rigged, and turnout had been only 34%. International observers ignored the referendum<sup>163</sup>, and the US Representative to OSCE, Sam W. Brown Jr, said on 31 August that it was a "second step backward from democracy". Interestingly, US criticisms of the referendum were generally similar to those made by the opposition Russian community organisations.<sup>164</sup>

<sup>160</sup> See: Politicheskoye zayavlenie respublikanskogo obschestvennogo slavyanskogo dvizheniya "Lad" o rospuske Verkhovnogo Soveta Respubliki Kazakhstan, Almaty [No publisher] 19.03.95; Russkaya Obschina protestuyet, Resolyutsiya obshego sobraniya, Almaty [No publisher] 20.03.95.

<sup>161</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Komitet po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyazyam s sootchestvennikami, Zayavlenie o politicheskom krizise v Kazakhstane, Doc. No.316/492, Moscow [No publisher] 13.03.95.

<sup>162</sup> Segodnya, 04.05.95.

<sup>163</sup> OMRI Daily Report No.170, Part I, 31.08.95; Opposition Says Referendum Turnout 34%, Result Invalid, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 04.09.95.

<sup>164</sup> The US statement said: "On August 1, the Kazakstani government published the "final version" of its new draft constitution. In the view of democracy and human rights activists in Kazakhstan, the new constitution does not adequately protect civil and human rights... The U.S. and other countries urged Kazakhstan to approach the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights to solicit technical assistance to bring the draft constitution more closely into line with democratic norms. The U.S. regrets that the government of Kazakhstan pressed forward with the 30 August referendum. In view of the predictable and frankly unbelievable Soviet-style results of the 29 April referendum which extended President Nazarbayev's term in office, there is little reason to doubt that official results of the 30 August vote will show the draft constitution winning by a vast overwhelming and equally unbelievable margin. The term extension referendum was a step backward from democracy in Kazakhstan. The U.S. regrets that the constitutional referendum is a second step backward from democracy. The U.S. expresses these concerns as a friend of Kazakhstan. Democracy is essential to Kazakhstan's long-term stability, unity, and prosperity. Kazakhstan is a young, multi-ethnic state facing a range of challenges and only participatory government can give Kazakstani citizens the sense of common destiny essential to maintaining political cohesion during a painful political and economic transition. The U.S. government did not send observers to monitor the constitutional referendum on 30 August". [US Disappointed in Constitutional Referendum in Kazakhstan, File ID: 95083103.WWE, USIA Database, 31.08.95].

The new constitution removed a number of the most obvious ethno-centric provisions, but still fell far short of Russian expectations. Though references to the ethnic nature of Kazakhstan's statehood were abolished, the preamble to the constitution still said that the "people of Kazakhstan" were creating their statehood "on ancestral Kazakh lands". This served to remind all non-Kazakhs that they were considered guests on Kazakh territory, though this was untrue of many non-Kazakh citizens. Article 10 denied citizenship of any other country to Kazakhstan citizens without exception. This eliminated the privileged status Kazakhs had previously enjoyed with regard to dual citizenship, but also explicitly prevented any future agreements on dual citizenship between Russia and Kazakhstan.

Article 6 stipulated that land could be private property "on grounds, conditions and within limits, established by law".<sup>165</sup> Such law could not be a problem for the Kazakh leadership, because Nazarbayev had already decided to establish total control over the legislature, so that he could adopt and amend laws which as he wished. Article 7 reiterated the role of Kazakh as the only "state" language. Russian was upgraded to an "official" language,<sup>166</sup> but still denied the equal status with Kazakh which was one of the Russian community organisations' major demands.

But the main issue of concern was that the new constitution concentrated almost unlimited power in the President's hands, in provisions which attracted the bulk of the Russian community organisations' criticisms.<sup>167</sup> Russians in Kazakhstan understood only too well, from experience of previous Soviet constitutions, that whatever improvements the new constitution might contain, in the absence of basic democratic guarantees its provisions would remain on paper, and serve only to camouflage continuation of ethno-centric policies. Excessive concentration of power in the President's hands, and the lack of effective checks and balances to his authority, meant that the Russian community lost even the minor leverage on government policy which it previously had.

All throughout 1995 Nazarbayev justified establishment of authoritarian rule by the necessity to achieve inter-ethnic consolidation. This, however, soon proved only empty promises. A major consequence of the political transformation in 1995 was an even greater sidelining of ethnic Russians from politics and government. By late 1995 81.4% of posts at the level of ministers, heads of state committees, committees and departments were held by Kazakhs, and only 14% by Russians, compared to 64.2% and 21% respectively in 1994.<sup>168</sup> During the elections to the new two-chamber parliament,<sup>169</sup> held on 5 and 9 December 1995,

<sup>165</sup> Konstitutsiya Respubliki Kazakhstan, Almaty: "Kazakhstan", 1995, p. 6.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>167</sup> Kazakh Protest Rally over New Draft Constitution, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 29.07.97.

<sup>168</sup> Moskovskiy Komsomolets, 24.08.95.

<sup>169</sup> Deputies to the upper house, the Senate, were to be elected by province electoral colleges made up of all members of representative bodies of each province. Two senators were to be elected from each province, cities under republic's jurisdiction and the capital. Seven senators were to be appointed by the president. This brought the

candidates for the Senate were nominated directly from Almaty. As a result 28 were unopposed, and 26 of the 38 elected (68%) were Kazakhs.<sup>170</sup> In the elections to the Majilis, the government did its best to eliminate opposition candidates, sometimes employing overtly oppressive measures.<sup>171</sup> As a result 53 (79%) of the 67 Majilis seats went to pro-government candidates.<sup>172</sup> Data on the ethnic composition of the Majilis are not available, but officially selected deputies, whatever their ethnicity, obediently followed Nazarbayev's political line.

In an interview with Moscow's NTV television on 22 October 1997, Nazarbayev disclosed that Kazakhs were 70% of government members and provincial governors,<sup>173</sup> substantially more than the percentage of Kazakhs in the population. Besides, this remark referred only to a very narrow circle of top officials, and did not include other senior positions in the state apparatus such as deputy ministers, deputy province governors, mayors of large cities, or the presidential administration. In the latter, for example, by January 1997 Kazakhs held 75% of the leading positions.<sup>174</sup> Nazarbayev produced no figures for the ethnic composition of the most important government departments such as the Foreign, Defence and Interior Ministries and the National Security Committee, nor did he evince any desire to conduct new parliamentary elections which would adequately reflect Kazakhstan's ethnic balance.

On 22 December 1995 Nazarbayev issued a decree "On Land", which had the force of law. It established that all land in Kazakhstan remained state property, except for plots adjacent to or allocated for construction of residential buildings, installations and their compounds, for gardening or vegetable growing or production, or any other facilities specific to the land. The edict barred private ownership of agricultural land or peasants' private plots. Peasants would receive "the right to permanent land use", but the land remained state property. This meant rejection of farmers' demands for private ownership of agricultural land, particularly widespread among Russians, and especially among Cossacks, who were trying to resurrect the 'stanitsa' with its specific form of private property in land.

Formally the "buy-out" procedure established by the edict for alienation of privately owned land "for state needs" looked like corresponding to international norms with the final decision on disagreements between the government and a landowner left to the courts. But under Kazakhstan's realities, where courts are government instruments without the relative independence they have in democratic

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total number of senators to 47. To the lower chamber, the Majilis, 67 deputies were to be elected on the basis of direct voting in electoral districts.

<sup>170</sup> *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 08.12.95.

<sup>171</sup> The most outrageous episode involved Ataman Gunkin, who was abducted by police officers at the headquarters of an election precinct, where he came to register [*Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 03.11.95].

<sup>172</sup> Calculation is made on the basis of statistics, provided in: Mashanov, M.S., *Sravnitel'nyy analiz partiynogo aspekta parlamentskikh vyborov 1994 i 1995 godov*, Almaty: IRK, 1996, pp. 14-15.

<sup>173</sup> President Nazarbayev Denies Breach of Ethnic Russians' Rights, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 28.10.97

<sup>174</sup> *Struktura administratsii Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan i perechen' dolzhnostnykh lits, obespechivayushchikh ego deyatelnost'* // *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 10.01.97, p. 1.

countries, this provision could in no way hamper government arbitrariness, and no land owner could be sure that he would be fairly compensated (if at all) for his property.

Moreover, the edict contained clear discriminatory provisions against ethnic Russians, by stipulating that private land plots "may not be in private ownership by foreign citizens" (Article 33). This meant that any ethnic Russian who chose Russian citizenship would lose the right to own any land he held. Moreover, Article 40 stipulated that "right to permanent use of land may not be granted to foreign land users", so Russian citizens in Kazakhstan would have only the right of temporary land use, for which, under Article 8, they would be obliged to pay "to the extent to which that right was not previously purchased". Since in Soviet times land plots were allocated free of charge, this would necessitate paying the full market value. In all the land decree created strong material disincentives for ethnic Russians to take up Russian citizenship.

The Kazakh authorities continued persecution of Russian community activists, adding new fuel to the existing tensions in bilateral relations with Russia. On 20 August 1996 Nina Sidorova, head of the Russian Centre in Almaty, was arrested on charges of insulting judges and guards during Gunkin's trial. Again a Russian reaction followed. On 16 September a protest demonstration was held outside the Kazakh Embassy in Moscow.<sup>175</sup> On 18 September 1996 the Duma Committee for CIS Affairs and Ties with Compatriots issued a statement expressing concern about "the continuing persecution of the Russian population in Kazakhstan", and calling on the Kazakh authorities to "cease persecution and harassment of the Russian population, Cossacks in particular".<sup>176</sup> Sidorova was convicted of contempt of court and injuring an official of the Procurator's Office, and sentenced to two years' imprisonment, but the sentence was immediately suspended under an amnesty to mark the anniversary of Kazakhstan's constitution.<sup>177</sup> In May 1997 Petr Kolomets, Deputy Ataman of the Semirechye Cossack Force, was arrested in Almaty. Russian Cossacks held protest rallies demanding Kolomets' release in Moscow, Kurgan and some other Russian cities, for example a small demonstration in June 1997 outside Kazakhstan's Embassy in Moscow.<sup>178</sup>

The policy of administratively restricting use of the Russian language also remained unchanged. On 4 November 1996 Nazarbayev endorsed the "Concept of Language Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan", which advocated altering the "hierarchy of languages" and giving priority to development of the Kazakh language. It did not envisage a wide sphere of long-term use of Russian, and contained provisions that could be interpreted as establishing administrative

<sup>175</sup> Protest in Moscow about Treatment of Kazakhstan's Russian Population, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 18.09.96.

<sup>176</sup> Russian MPs Concerned about Treatment of Russians in Kazakhstan, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 23.09.96.

<sup>177</sup> Ethnic Russian Activist Found Guilty, but Sentence Lifted, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 23.12.96.

<sup>178</sup> Zavtra, 27.05.97, 30.06.97, 22.07.97.

barriers to employment in certain non-public service professions by requiring knowledge of the Kazakh language.<sup>179</sup> Nazarbayev's endorsement prompted criticism by the Russian government. Minister for Cooperation with CIS States Tuleyev sent a note to Nazarbayev and the speakers of both houses of the Kazakh parliament, saying that the concept "limits the already curtailed rights of the Russian-speaking part of the population", and calling for revision of some of its provisions, on the grounds that they contradicted the principles of the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance.<sup>180</sup>

Despite this, on 18 June 1997 Kazakhstan's parliament passed a law "On Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan", which was based on the concept, and confirmed the Kazakh language as the only state language. Russian was to be officially used "equally with Kazakh" in state and local administration. But the notion of "equality" was undermined by Article 23 of the law, which established a special state program "for priority of the state language and stage-by-stage transfer of administrative work into the Kazakh language", and by Article 9, under which Kazakh was to be the main language of state legislation and other acts of state bodies. Kazakhstan's diplomatic missions were to function in Kazakh, and "in other languages when necessary", official diplomatic receptions to be conducted in Kazakh, and bilateral treaties to be written in the "state languages" of the contracting parties.

A peculiarity of the law was that it went beyond the sphere of official relations into that of private communication. It said that Kazakh was to be used in non-governmental organisations, though other languages could also be used "in case of necessity" (Article 8), that internal documentation in state and private organisations must be in both Kazakh and Russian (Article 10), as must all contracts between individuals or companies (Article 15). Thus private deals between two or more Russians, or between companies in Russian-populated areas, would have to be in both languages, requiring a complicated bureaucratic process of certified translation into Kazakh, and companies in Russian-populated areas would have to employ Kazakh interpreters and translators, which would create extra difficulties in their work.

The law also prescribed that Kazakh-language TV and radio broadcasts should not be less than half of all broadcast time. Formally, this provision corresponded with established international practice that individual TV and radio stations could be assigned quotas for broadcasts in specific languages. But Kazakhstan's law applied this practice in an excessive way covering all TV and radio stations, both government and private, for the purpose of making life difficult for Russian-language electronic mass media, particularly in the Russian-majority provinces.

Another unprecedented requirement was that "cultural events" should be conducted in Kazakh and "when necessary in other languages", but without

<sup>179</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 06.11.96.

<sup>180</sup> Russia Warns against Change in Kazakhstan's Language Policy, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 23.11.96.

defining how “necessity” would be determined, thereby leaving the final decision to bureaucratic arbitrariness. Due to strong opposition from the non-Kazakh population, the law did not go as far as establishing a list of professions where knowledge of Kazakh would be obligatory, but it foreshadowed future adoption of such legislation.<sup>181</sup> Not surprisingly, the law was harshly criticised by members of the Society of Ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan at a press conference on 21 August 1997.<sup>182</sup>

The intensification of the ethno-centric policy can be explained by the fact that the Kazakh leadership’s hopes for early resolution of the inter-ethnic situation in the Kazakhs’ favour did not materialise. The main failure was in the economic sphere, where expectations of an early economic revival proved unfounded.<sup>183</sup> In addressing the nation in October 1997 Nazarbayev admitted that over the past eight years Kazakhstan’s economic output had shrunk “more than twice”, and the “standard of living of the majority of citizens deteriorated”.<sup>184</sup>

Despite various administrative limitations imposed by the Kazakh authorities, Russian remains Kazakhstan’s de facto first language. This was conceded by S. Orazalinov, Director of the Department for Coordinating Language Policy in Kazakhstan’s Ministry of Education and Culture, at a representative conference in Almaty in July 1997. He admitted that the Kazakh language had not yet acquired “worthy positions in education, science and public administration”, and was used only “among the indigenous population”, and predominantly “in the non-work environment”. He said that many Kazakh language study courses established several years before, had disappeared, and complained that while 3-5 years before enrolments to Kazakh-language secondary schools had increased, now a reverse process was under way. He went on to say that newspapers, journals and books in Kazakh, “which already have low circulation”, failed to sell, since there was no demand for them. Not all TV and radio channels, especially commercial ones, used Kazakh in their broadcasts, and in many ministries and departments the requirement to conduct business in both Kazakh and Russian was being ignored, and only Russian used.<sup>185</sup>

The Kazakh leadership failed to achieve a decisive shift in the demographic balance in favour of Kazakhs. Nazarbayev’s policies indeed led to a dramatic fall in the Russian population from 40.8% in 1990 to 36.4% in 1994 and 29% in 1997.<sup>186</sup> In 1997 emigration continued, and even increased compared to 1996. In the first nine months of 1997 230,786 emigrated from Kazakhstan, 57.5% of them ethnic

<sup>181</sup> *Zakon Respubliki Kazakhstan o Yazikakh v Respublike Kazakhstan* // *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 15.07.97, p. 2.

<sup>182</sup> RFE/RL Newsline Vol.1, No.101, Part I, 22.08.97.

<sup>183</sup> Tables A.6 and A.7 (Appendixes 7 and 8) contain some economic indicators of Kazakhstan’s agricultural and industrial development in 1985-1995.

<sup>184</sup> Nazarbayev, N., *Kazakhstan - 2030: protsvetanie, bezopasnost' i uluchshenie blagosostoyaniya kazakhstantsev*, *Poslanie Prezidenta strany narodu Kazakhstana* // *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 11.10.97, p. 8.

<sup>185</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 11.07.97.

<sup>186</sup> *Russia*, No.19, 1994, p. 4; *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 28.05.97.

Russians.<sup>187</sup> However in combination with other Slavs and non-Kazakhs who perceive themselves as Russian-speakers they are still about half of the population.

At the same time, the post-independence years registered a rapid decrease in the ethnic Kazakh birth rate. One factor that may have contributed was the difficult economic situation. M. Tatimov, a senior expert in the Information and Analytical Centre of the presidential administration, noted with concern that the Kazakh birth rate was falling "even faster than in the years of destruction, famine and war (the 1920s, 30s and 40s)".<sup>188</sup> In his address to the nation in October 1997 Nazarbayev pointed to a real danger of "demographic depopulation" in Kazakhstan, noting that for the first time in the past 50 years "our population has begun to shrink". He called for "immediate termination of this trend", and identified demographic and migration policy as "a leading priority of national security".<sup>189</sup>

Besides, Russian emigration from Kazakhstan had a certain specific character, which contributed to accentuating the inter-ethnic divide. It affected primarily the southern, Kazakh-populated provinces. According to A. Galiev, Head of the Chair at the Interior Ministry Higher School in Almaty, the extent of emigration from northern and southern provinces varied substantially. The largest emigration took place from seven provinces - Mangistau, Kzyl-Orda, Atirau, Zhambul, South-Kazakhstan and Taldy-Kurgan. The lowest migration was from North-Kazakhstan, West-Kazakhstan, Kostanay, Kokchetau, East-Kazakhstan, Akmola, Aktyubinsk and Pavlodar provinces.<sup>190</sup> The second group comprised mostly provinces with a Russian-majority population, and the trend indicated that Russians there were not particularly keen to emigrate. The prospect of re-colonisation of the northern provinces by Kazakhs, given their poor demographic situation, does not look very promising, at least in the short term.

In the RFMS assessment, exacerbation of the problem of the "northern territories" can be expected. "The predominantly Russian-speaking population there can choose secession from Kazakhstan instead of a massive exodus, and this could cause serious complications in Russian-Kazakhstan inter-state relations".<sup>191</sup> Another disturbing fact is a finding of a sociological survey that secessionist attitudes are much stronger among younger-generation ethnic Russians. According to N. Baytenova, a political scientist from the Kazakh National University, separatist attitudes among Russians are more characteristic of those under 35 years

<sup>187</sup> The information was provided by Merhat Sharipzhan from RFE/RL Kazakh Broadcasting Service with reference to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Bureau in Akmola and Kazakh State Agency on Statistics.

<sup>188</sup> Tatimov, M., *Vliyaniye demograficheskikh protsessov na vnutripoliticheskuyu stabilnost' Respubliki Kazakhstan // Politika (Almaty), No. 5, 1995, p. 22.*

<sup>189</sup> Nazarbayev, N., *Kazakhstan - 2030: protsvetaniye, bezopasnost' i uluchsheniye blagosostoyaniya kazakhstantsev, Poslanie Prezidenta strany narodu Kazakhstana // Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 11.10.97, pp. 8, 14-15.*

<sup>190</sup> Galiev, A., *Etnodemograficheskie i etnomigratsionnyye protsessy v Kazakhstane // Evraziyskoye soobshchestvo: ekonomika, politika, bezopasnost', No. 2, 1995, p. 61.*

<sup>191</sup> *Federal'naya Migratsionnaya Sluzhba Rossii, O rabote Migratsionnoy sluzhby posol'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii v Respublike Kazakhstan v 1994 godu, Doc. No. 722, Moscow [No publisher] 13.04.95, pp. 10-11.*

of age, while the over-50s are indifferent or against secession.<sup>192</sup> This suggests that as time goes by, Russian secessionist potential in Kazakhstan is likely to increase.

The policy directed at neutralising the Cossack movement also failed, and attempts to split the Cossack organisations had only very limited results. One example is the situation in Uralsk. According to *Zavtra*, Nazarbayev's secret services managed to neutralise the former leadership of the Ural Cossacks, and put their "agents" into leading positions in major Cossack organisations, which then proclaimed that the Cossack movement's main objective must be solution of economic problems. The newspaper identified as "agents" leaders of the Ural Cossacks such as Bukin and Solodilov, who secured the support of the majority of Cossacks through promises of funds, allegedly opened for them in Almaty.<sup>193</sup> Those Cossacks who opposed Bukin and Solodilov were grouped around A Kachalin, the pro-Moscow Ataman of the Ural Cossack Force.

The other example is the Union of Cossacks of Semirechye (to be differentiated from the Semirechye Cossack Force), supported by official Almaty and headed by Ovsyannikov. He promoted the idea that Cossacks should be loyal to Nazarbayev, since they always served sovereign Kazakhstan. His union, which initially had a following of only 50, began a contest with Gunkin's organisation for influence over the Semirechye Cossacks. In July 1997 Ovsyannikov's deputy, Shikhotov, published an article in *Kazakhstanskaya pravda* bitterly attacking Gunkin, and saying that he "should not be associated with the Semirechye Cossacks."<sup>194</sup> Gunkin in his turn claimed that he had evidence proving that Ovsyannikov had always been an officer of Kazakhstan's Interior Ministry, and had deliberately tried to hinder development of the Cossack movement.<sup>195</sup> Despite these episodes, most Cossack organisations in Kazakhstan maintained their independence, and remained opposed to the regime.

The First Division of the Siberian Cossack Force decided to hold its Assembly in Kokchetau on 2 May 1997. This was clearly a provocative move, specifically scheduled for the May holidays and celebrations. The main issue on the agenda was "determination of the status of the lands of the Siberian Cossack Force located at present on the territory of Kazakhstan". It was expected that Cossacks from other areas of Kazakhstan and from Russia would attend. The organisers planned to use the Assembly to proclaim creation of a South Siberian Republic, which would include Kokchetau, Pavlodar and North-Kazakhstan provinces. The Kazakh authorities knew of the planned action and prepared for it well in advance. The Assembly was, naturally, banned, some Cossack activists were summoned to the local police and Committee of National Security (CNS), extra police and

<sup>192</sup> Baytenova, N., *Mezhetnicheskaya integratsiya v Kazakhstane: sostoyanie i perspektivy* // *Politika* (Almaty), No.3, 1995, p. 29.

<sup>193</sup> Boroday, A., *Ray Nazarbaeva* // *Zavtra*, No.11, 1997.

<sup>194</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 05.07.97.

<sup>195</sup> *Opasnost' zaklyuchaetsya ne v voyne a v samoobmane, kotoryy opravdyvaet nereshitelnost' rossiyskoy vlasti* // *Shturm*, No.3, 1996, pp. 33-34.



troops were deployed in Kokchetau, and reinforced units patrolled the streets during the May holidays. Russian representatives arriving for the Assembly were intercepted at the railway station and forcibly turned back. Ten of them were arrested by the local police. When groups of Cossacks gathered in the centre of the city on 2 May, they were surrounded by Interior Ministry troops and driven out of the city. They managed to hold their meeting in the outskirts, but it obviously failed to produce any strong political effect.<sup>196</sup> Nevertheless the action served to show that the Cossack movement was still alive, and prepared to defy the authorities.

The Russian leadership was disappointed by its inability to induce Nazarbayev to change his political course. On 23 November 1996, during a meeting with Nazarbayev, Yeltsin proposed drawing up a new, broader agreement on the status of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan. According to presidential spokesman Yastrzhembskiy: "Yeltsin suggested to Nazarbayev that a joint document be drafted on the status of the Russian-speaking population in Kazakhstan, defining personal guarantees and the status of the Russian language there... Such a document will put an end to speculation and discrimination in this field".<sup>197</sup> Yeltsin's proposal indicated that he saw the weaknesses of the previous agreements with Kazakhstan, and wanted to improve the situation. But Nazarbayev showed no inclination to negotiate a new treaty.

In January 1997, as a clear signal of dissatisfaction with Kazakhstan's attitude, Moscow decided to deploy Cossack units along the Russia-Kazakhstan border. Their functions included checking documents and inspecting baggage of persons entering Russia from Kazakhstan. To manage these units Russia's Federal Border Guards Service (RFBGS) established a new Border Watch Directorate.<sup>198</sup> This was a basic policy reversal, because previously Russia had made rather firm commitments to the principle of open borders with Kazakhstan. RFBGS naturally tried to downplay the event, describing it as "an experiment" to combat drug trafficking and smuggling, and involving unarmed volunteers.<sup>199</sup> The "experiment" embraced at least four large Russian provinces - Saratov, Orenburg, Chelyabinsk and Omsk - and was to be extended to the whole 7,500 km length of the joint border after the trial period ended in June.<sup>200</sup> Moreover, by late March 1997 it was already known that the "volunteers" were in fact light-armed units.<sup>201</sup>

Russia's move evoked an angry reaction in Almaty. On 25 March 1997 B.Sarsekov, Secretary of Kazakhstan's Security Council, criticised the decision, pointing out that it was at odds with the open borders agreement with Russia. "In some Russian regions along the Kazakh border, the Russian Federation has set up

<sup>196</sup> Zavtra, 22.04.97, 05.05.97.

<sup>197</sup> Yeltsin Proposes Accord on Ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 27.11.96.

<sup>198</sup> Reuters News Service, 16.04.97.

<sup>199</sup> Reuters News Service, 16.04.97.

<sup>200</sup> Russia Denies Breaking Accords with Kazakhstan over Border Guards, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 28.03.97.

<sup>201</sup> Cossacks Reject Protests at Their Role on Kazakh-Russian Border, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 28.03.97.

Cossack posts. These Cossacks received uniforms and weapons. These Cossacks are a prototype border guard force," he told a news conference in Almaty.<sup>202</sup> On 16 April this was followed by a formal statement by the Kazakhstan Foreign Ministry press-service, which expressed regret at the Russian move. The statement said that "serious concern has been provoked by an experiment by Russia's Federal Border Guards Service to place non-regular units manned by Cossacks to guard the border". The statement claimed that this was a "serious breach" of existing bilateral accords on the regime of the common border, and drew particular attention to the Cossack involvement.<sup>203</sup>

On 16 May Nazarbayev addressed a group of Russian journalists in Almaty, and blamed Russia for what he described as the loss of trust in the CIS among its members.<sup>204</sup> He devoted a substantial part of his statement to Cossacks, saying that he was alarmed that Cossack units had been deployed to guard the Russian-Kazakh border and that he had sent a special memorandum on this issue to Yeltsin, but still had received no reply. In a veiled warning, Nazarbayev said that in Kazakhstan "under the sultans and khans there were Sardars, military formations similar to Cossacks under the Tsars", and that pressure was mounting on him to recreate such formations and deploy them in all provinces of Kazakhstan.<sup>205</sup>

Tuleyev himself a Kazakh, reacted sharply to Nazarbayev's comments, calling them "anti-Russian". On 20 May 1997 he issued a statement, in which he stressed that Russia "will continue to condemn Kazakhstan's policy towards Russian and Russian-speaking citizens", criticised Kazakhstan's decision to reduce the quantity of Russian-language TV and radio broadcasts, and opposed the adoption of "a discriminatory language law, which infringes the interests of the Russian-speaking population".<sup>206</sup> Now it was Almaty's turn to feel offended. A diplomatic protest was sent to the Russian Foreign Ministry. Tuleyev revealed in an interview that Nazarbayev had personally asked Yeltsin to dismiss him.<sup>207</sup> Nor did Nazarbayev stop at that. In an interview shown on Kazakh TV on 27 June 1997, he warned that Kazakhs "should be ready to preserve the country's independence and integrity", because many "ill-wishers" had emerged in Russia, and "have drawn up different programs, if not to go back to the Soviet Union, then to bring Kazakhstan back under Russia's wing.", programs which included as a last resort "stirring up ethnic Russians living in Kazakhstan with the idea of separatism, and setting them against ethnic Kazakhs".<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Reuters News Service, 25.09.97

<sup>203</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 17.04.97.

<sup>204</sup> Russian Minister Responds to President Nazarbayev's Remarks, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 22.05.97.

<sup>205</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 28.05.97.

<sup>206</sup> Russian Minister Responds to President Nazarbayev's Remarks, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 22.05.97.

<sup>207</sup> Tuleyev, A., SNG: blef ili integratsiya? Beseda s Aleksandrom Prokhanovym i Valentinom Chikinym // *Zavtra*, No.21, 1997.

<sup>208</sup> Kazakh President Warns of Possible Threat from Russia, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 30.06.97.

Simultaneously with verbal attacks against Russian policy, Almaty continued pressing Moscow to revoke the decision on Cossack-manned border posts. On 4 June 1997 at a meeting of the Council of CIS Border Troops commanders in Moscow, the Kazakh representative called the Cossack involvement an "experiment" which "caused certain tension ... in Kazakhstan" and urged Moscow to terminate it.<sup>209</sup> But Moscow was in no hurry to accommodate the Kazakh demands, obviously finding the border patrols an effective instrument of diplomatic leverage over Kazakhstan on human rights issues. On 26 June 1997, while returning from New York, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Tokayev had a brief meeting with his Russian counterpart, Primakov, during a stopover in Moscow, and again raised the Cossack issue. Primakov replied that "the experiment" was temporary, and that the Russian Foreign Ministry "was recommending" that it be abandoned, but he gave no clear indication of when this might happen.<sup>210</sup>

Nazarbayev discussed the issue of border controls with Yeltsin on 6 September 1997, while attending Moscow's 850th anniversary celebrations. Yeltsin promised that Chernomyrdin and other high-ranking Russian officials would visit Kazakhstan and sign a number of bilateral agreements on that and other issues.<sup>211</sup> On 29 September A. Nikolayev, Russian Federal Border Service Director, arrived in Almaty and met Nazarbayev, obviously to discuss the Cossack border guards issue. After the meeting Nazarbayev told journalists that the two countries' border guard services would prepare and sign an agreement on the regime and status of the Russian-Kazakh border, which would provide for "elementary security" along it. Nikolayev added that Kazakhstan had agreed on joint measures with Russia to reinforce its "outer" (non-CIS) borders.<sup>212</sup> But Nikolayev's visit did not solve the Cossack question. It is unlikely to be solved until a broader agreement providing for Russia's increased role in Kazakhstan's border protection is negotiated, a process likely to be prolonged. In fact, Russia may well prolong them by putting forward more and more conditions, and linking success of the negotiations to Kazakh concessions on the status of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan.

This conclusion is substantiated by the results of Chernomyrdin's visit to Kazakhstan on 4 October 1997. He and Nazarbayev agreed to form an inter-governmental commission on cooperation between the two countries. Its main task is to prepare Yeltsin's official visit to Kazakhstan, and negotiate a new basic treaty to replace the treaty on friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance, because as it was said, "time requires clarification of many notions which emerged five years ago, when the previous document was adopted".<sup>213</sup> The understanding was probably a development of Yeltsin's 1996 proposal for a new agreement with Kazakhstan on the status of ethnic Russians. In any event, it means that Russia has

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<sup>209</sup> Kommersant-Daily, 06.06.97.

<sup>210</sup> Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 28.06.97.

<sup>211</sup> Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 09.09.97.

<sup>212</sup> Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 02.10.97.

<sup>213</sup> Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 07.10.97.

managed to draw Kazakhstan into re-negotiating the previous basic agreement, which it saw as inadequately serving Russian interests, especially on the question of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan. Consent to negotiate was itself a major Kazakh concession, but previous experience of negotiations between Russia and Kazakhstan suggests that they are hardly likely to proceed without major difficulties, or to have an outcome both early and successful. Moreover, the negotiation process itself is likely to have further adverse effects on bilateral relations, result in additional diplomatic complications, and not remove the major differences over the status of ethnic Russians. To overcome these differences, either Russia's or Kazakhstan's policies on matters of principle must change, but there are no signs that this is likely, at least in the foreseeable future.

## CHAPTER 3

### RUSSIAN AND KAZAKH APPROACHES TO CIS INTEGRATION

Relations between Russia and Kazakhstan in the post-Soviet era were very much dependent on their interaction within the multilateral CIS framework. Kazakhstan's attitude to the CIS was predetermined by its very large dependence on economic relations with other CIS states. According to expert assessments Kazakhstan in a fully isolated situation could manufacture only 27% of the products it was manufacturing in 1991, whereas the figure for Russia would be 64.5%. Kazakhstan's economy could produce only 42% of the consumer goods sold there.<sup>1</sup> Before independence Kazakhstan ran regular trade deficits with the rest of the USSR, which in 1990 reached 7 billion roubles.<sup>2</sup> Besides, in Soviet times Kazakhstan's economy relied heavily on subsidies from the USSR central government, which, according to the *Economist*, covered 23% of its budget in 1991.<sup>3</sup> Thus Kazakhstan's immediate transition to economic self-reliance was not possible even in theory. In these circumstances Nazarbayev's diplomatic tactics were shaped by the need to maintain the system of CIS economic interrelationships to the extent possible, and utilise its benefits to restructure and modernise Kazakhstan's economy.

Kazakhstan's great dependence on economic relations with other CIS republics was the reason why Nazarbayev, even before the collapse of the USSR, persistently insisted on preserving economic union, while at the same time actively pursuing the dismantling of the Union's central political structures, which limited Kazakhstan's sovereignty. From the very first days after dissolution of the USSR Nazarbayev stood firmly for economic integration within the CIS. At the CIS Heads of State meeting in Moscow on 16 January 1992 he suggested renouncing import restrictions and restrictive licensing of products intended for industrial and technical purposes, and repealing taxes on imports and exports in transit through CIS states. But these proposals were greeted unenthusiastically by some other CIS members, especially Ukraine, and even Yeltsin's support failed to secure their acceptance.<sup>4</sup>

When the CIS summit in Minsk on 14 February 1992 ended without any major breakthroughs in the economic field, Nazarbayev did not conceal his frustration. In an interview immediately after the summit he criticised "paralysis of economic links, closure of trade borders by way of licences and quotas, economic disintegration", and put forward a program of economic integration:

<sup>1</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiey E.M.Kozhokina, (Kazakhstan: realities and prospects of independent development, / under general editorship of E M Kozhokin) Moscow: RISI, 1995 pp. 14, 138.

<sup>2</sup> Kazakhstan-Rossiya: sostoyanie i perspektivy ekonomicheskogo sotrudnichestva / Ed. Tsentr Strategicheskikh Issledovaniy Respubliki Kazakhstan, Almaty: "Tulga", 1993, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Economist*, Vol.325, No.7791, 1993, p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> *Izvestiya*, 18.01.92.

1. Setting up "a good and powerful coordinating centre..., perhaps an assembly like the European Parliament".
2. Creation of a banking union for those within the rouble currency zone.
3. Coordination of pricing policy for basic sectors of the economy, especially for power and fuel; examine coordination of monetary and credit procedures, investment procedures, "and so forth".
4. Lifting all customs barriers
5. Harmonising legislation to create a normal environment for businessmen.<sup>5</sup>

Explaining his position on CIS integration during his visit to Austria a few days later, Nazarbayev said that each CIS member should be politically independent and free, but the CIS should remain a single economic area like the European Community.<sup>6</sup>

The program he proposed was very pragmatic, and directed not so much at strategic objectives of CIS integration, but at meeting Kazakhstan's immediate economic needs. The idea of creating a powerful coordinating centre "like the European Parliament" was illogical, because the European Parliament never was and still is not such a coordination centre. Thus, Nazarbayev proposed a largely symbolic supranational body that would be unable to limit Kazakhstan's sovereignty in any way, nor impose guidelines which Kazakhstan was not prepared to follow. On the other hand, the proposals to create a banking union and coordinate monetary and credit procedures reflected Nazarbayev's desire to have a say in decisions on rouble emission. After the collapse of the USSR the emission of roubles remained in Moscow's hands, and it could supply other republics with cash at its own discretion. In the first quarter of 1992 the Russian Central Bank raised the percentage emission allocated to Russia from 66% in 1990-91 to 80%. It also refused to accept bills of exchange or cheques from other rouble zone states.<sup>7</sup> Nazarbayev obviously hoped that introduction of a coordinating structure such as a banking union would impose some restrictions on Moscow, and perhaps subordinate it to the combined will of the other CIS states.

Russia in its turn was extremely dissatisfied with the policies of central banks of other CIS states, including Kazakhstan. Finding themselves free of Moscow's control, they embarked on unrestrained non-cash emission of roubles. Russia was the only republic which printed roubles, but all central banks in the rouble zone could issue rouble credits. Local central banks lent to local commercial banks, commercial banks lent to local companies, and the companies used the money to buy imports, mostly from Russia itself. As a result, this mass of credit roubles ended up in Russian exporters' bank accounts. Russia was immediately awash with devalued money, which was spurring enormous inflation and a massive outflow of goods and resources to other CIS countries. Russia countered by

<sup>5</sup> Nazarbayev: Summit and Documents "Not Particularly Comforting", BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 18.02.92.

<sup>6</sup> Nazarbayev Refuses to Enact Unilateral Nuclear Disarmament, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 26.02.92.

<sup>7</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report, No.96, 20.05.92.

introducing restrictions on exports of fuel and energy resources, and on some essential raw materials and manufactures. This limited Kazakhstan's ability to buy the resources and goods it needed freely in Russia. Hence Nazarbayev's proposal to lift all customs barriers.

Very painful for Kazakhstan was Moscow's decision to free fuel prices. These were much below world market prices, and the Soviet economy in general and Kazakhstan's in particular had become dependent on cheap energy and fuel. Freeing prices overnight could have a destabilising effect on Kazakhstan's economy, hence Nazarbayev's proposal to coordinate pricing policy for basic sectors of the economy, especially power and fuel. Almaty pleaded with Moscow to postpone freeing of oil prices until mid-summer, when major agricultural work would be over, but Moscow agreed on only a one-month delay, until mid-May.<sup>8</sup> Kazakhstan then mobilised Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Uzbekistan and Ukraine to appeal jointly to Russia to delay the freeing of oil prices until October, when sowing and harvesting would be over.<sup>9</sup>

At the Central Asian states' meeting in Bishkek on 22-23 April 1992, Russia was criticised for failing to consult its CIS partners on monetary policy such as price formation and meeting their increased needs for roubles.<sup>10</sup> Following the meeting Nazarbayev announced that his "confidence in the stability of the Commonwealth had decreased of late", and said he was dissatisfied over progress in establishing joint cooperation bodies, putting the blame on Russia and Ukraine.<sup>11</sup> It was also at that time that reports of Kazakhstan's intention to introduce its own currency began to circulate in the media. In an article that appeared in several Kazakhstan newspapers on 17 May, Nazarbayev was quoted as saying that Kazakhstan might have to introduce its own currency "without waiting for economic stabilisation".<sup>12</sup>

These rumours were not without foundation. In early 1992 Nazarbayev signed a top secret decree on preparation to introduce Kazakhstan's own currency. Nazarbayev himself approved the designs, the masters were kept in a safe in a British bank, and agreement was reached with a British company to print the money promptly when ordered.<sup>13</sup> But Kazakhstan had as yet no intention of introducing its own currency. Staying in the rouble zone conferred some substantial advantages - ability to buy goods and services in Russia in excess of goods and services provided to Russia by Kazakhstan. The rouble zone was in fact a new form of Russian subsidy to other CIS members. While it existed, Nazarbayev wanted to take full advantage of it. But many in the Russian government started to voice objections, and insist that the zone be abolished. Only then did Nazarbayev order 20% of the Kazakh currency to be printed, "just in case".

<sup>8</sup> Gaydar Tells Viewers of Postponement of Oil Price Liberalisation, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 30.03.92.

<sup>9</sup> Reuters News Service, 02.04.92.

<sup>10</sup> Izvestiya, 25.04.92.

<sup>11</sup> Reuters News Service, 23.04.92.

<sup>12</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report, No.96, 20.05.92.

<sup>13</sup> Nazarbayev, N., Na poroge XXI veka, pp. 143-144.

In Russia there were influential Eurasianist-orientated forces, who insisted that the rouble zone should be preserved, in the hope that it would facilitate integration within the CIS. Since Parliament controlled the Russian Central Bank, it could exercise strong leverage over Russian monetary policy. There were two solutions to the monetary problem: either firm Russian control of currency-issuing over all participants in the rouble zone, or introduction of national currencies by individual CIS countries. The Russian Central Bank tried to explore the option of maintaining the rouble zone without disadvantaging the Russian economy. An attempt to realise this alternative was made at the meeting of CIS central banks in Bishkek on 7-8 May, where it was agreed to create an Interbank Coordinating Council of the rouble zone states' central banks, charged to coordinate monetary policies, agree limits on budget deficits, and set the level of currency emission each quarter.<sup>14</sup> At the Tashkent summit on 15 May member-states agreed to settle a proportion of their debts to each other where possible, and introduced tougher penalties for non-payment. But the summit failed to agree on guidelines for the functioning of states in the rouble zone, or on introduction of national currencies.<sup>15</sup> On 21 May, at a conference in Tashkent, the CIS national banks consented to coordinate their efforts, exchange information, limit issuing of credits to republican governments and commercial banks, and shift gradually transition to a unified currency rate. Guidelines for monetary policy in the rouble zone were worked out, to be coordinated with member governments and endorsed at the next meeting of the Interbank Coordinating Council.<sup>16</sup>

None of these decisions produced substantial results. By 1 June 1992 the other CIS republics' debts to Russia had reached 214.7 billion roubles, and were growing rapidly.<sup>17</sup> On 21 June Yeltsin issued a decree on protection of Russia's monetary system, which established account-settling on reciprocal goods deliveries between Russia and other countries in the rouble zone, ruling out any possibility of automatic crediting of deliveries.<sup>18</sup> The new system provided that other CIS republics could make purchases in Russia only from special accounts at the Russian Central Bank. The system was designed to shield Russia from uncontrolled granting of credit, by creating a regime under which CIS countries could buy in Russia only with roubles earned from their own sales, or credits legally granted by the Russian Central Bank. The decision de facto split the rouble zone into sub-zones with roubles of different values. Thus the rouble in Kazakhstan was no longer equivalent in value to the rouble in Russia. The arrangement drew a sharp reaction from the Central Banks of Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus, which demanded an extraordinary meeting of the Interbank Coordinating Council.<sup>19</sup> But

<sup>14</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report, No.96, 20.05.92.

<sup>15</sup> Yeltsin Adviser on Finance Agreements Reached at Tashkent Meeting, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 18.05.92.

<sup>16</sup> Bankers in Rouble Zone Agree on Need to Coordinate Emission and Credit, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 29.05.92.

<sup>17</sup> Izvestiya, 09.07.92.

<sup>18</sup> Yeltsin Decree to Maintain Russian Control of Rouble in Rouble Zone, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 23.06.92.

<sup>19</sup> Izvestiya, 09.07.92.



Moscow refused to comply. The first serious crack had appeared in the rouble zone.

In August 1992 Nazarbayev proposed a new package of initiatives on economic integration within the CIS, including:

1. Establishment of a CIS Economic Council;
2. Creation of a banking union of rouble zone states;
3. Making the rouble a supranational currency, allowing other republics a say on emission and credit issues;
4. Establishment of a CIS Economic Court;
5. Strengthening the defence alliance and making it functional;
6. Organising the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly.<sup>20</sup>

The initiatives were very reminiscent of those he had advanced in February 1992, and reflected a similar set of economic and political priorities. They were limited and pragmatically oriented toward helping Kazakhstan solve its most acute problem, that of economic survival in the post-Soviet era, while at the same time avoiding any real limitations on its sovereignty. On the other hand they imposed real limitations on Russia's freedom of manoeuvre in economic policy, making it dependent on attitudes in Almaty, Tashkent or Kiev. As the largest country in the CIS, with economic potential far exceeding that of all the other members combined, Russia had no desire to become subordinate to decisions imposed by its smaller partners. No agreement other than acceptance of its own terms would be acceptable to Moscow, and Nazarbayev's proposals were no exception.

Not surprisingly, at the CIS summit in Bishkek on 9 October, Russia's position on Nazarbayev's initiatives was reserved. Yeltsin rejected the idea that other republics besides Russia should control rouble issuing and credits. When the question of an interstate bank was discussed, he rejected the proposal that each member have one vote.<sup>21</sup> It was decided to refer the question to a working group. Russia's Economic Minister Nechaev noted after the summit that creation of a single currency-issuing bank would necessitate a single budget policy, but this would infringe the rights of parliaments, and they would never agree to it.<sup>22</sup> Russian officials said they saw the bank's role as a clearing house for inter-state payments, rather than as a new rouble-zone central bank.<sup>23</sup> The CIS Economic Council's proposal was watered down and replaced by a "coordinating committee" with unspecified powers, and decision on it was postponed.

However, the summit took an important decision "On the Single Monetary System and Coordinated Credit and Currency Policies of States Which Retain the Rouble as Legal Tender". It was signed by nine CIS republics, including Russia and Kazakhstan, but not Ukraine, and declared the rouble the only legal tender in the signatories' territories. Limitations to rouble circulation were declared illegal, and

<sup>20</sup> Valovoy, D., *Kremlevskiy tupik i Nazarbayev*, Moscow: "Molodaya Gvardiya", 1993, pp. 168-169.

<sup>21</sup> *Megapolis-Express*, 14.10.92.

<sup>22</sup> *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 10.10.92.

<sup>23</sup> Reuters News Service, 22.01.93.

the parties authorised the Central Bank of Russia to control cash and credit issuance pending establishment of an Interstate Bank. Credit quotas were to be fixed by the Interbank Coordinating Council. Russia was responsible for providing the signatories' Central Banks with adequate amounts of cash.<sup>24</sup> At the same time Moscow gave its CIS partners two and a half months to determine their monetary and credit policy, and reserved the right to raise the question of making the rouble Russia's currency only, unless this demand was met.<sup>25</sup> For Nazarbayev this outcome was unpromising. The major objectives of his "integration" policy had not been achieved.

When on 14 December 1992 Chernomyrdin was elected Russian Prime Minister, Nazarbayev's hopes of preserving the rouble zone were revived. In contrast to the young and liberal-minded Gaidar, Chernomyrdin was an experienced old-school Soviet bureaucrat, and also a personal acquaintance of Nazarbayev. On the day after Chernomyrdin's election, Nazarbayev spoke in an interview on *Ostankino* TV Channel in favour of a smaller and tighter Commonwealth, comprising only the states which supported the rouble zone and joined the defence alliance.<sup>26</sup>

During Chernomyrdin's visit to Alma-Ata on 19 December, Nazarbayev tried to exploit their personal relationship. He asked Chernomyrdin if Kazakhstan could count on staying in the rouble zone, and Chernomyrdin promised that Kazakhstan could "definitely stay in the rouble space".<sup>27</sup> Nazarbayev agreed to send an official delegation to Moscow to draft an accord on payments and deliveries of oil, non-ferrous metals and timber.<sup>28</sup> Knowing Chernomyrdin's background in the Russian oil and gas industry, Nazarbayev wanted to use his interest in Kazakhstan's energy resources to facilitate agreements in other fields. Both agreed to proceed with plans to create CIS banking and economic unions, whatever the results of the next Commonwealth summit.<sup>29</sup>

During the negotiations in Moscow on 24 December, Russia and Kazakhstan signed several documents; they included an agreement on cooperation in the power and energy industry; on procedure for debt settlement for 1992 and implementation of inter-government credit; a protocol on the meeting between the leaderships of Russia's and Kazakhstan's national banks; a protocol on implementing accords in monetary and credit relations; an agreement on mutual deliveries of production and technical goods and cooperation between the two countries' metallurgical industries in 1993.<sup>30</sup> Soon afterwards, Chernomyrdin made another gesture of accommodation to Nazarbayev. On 9 January 1993 he arranged a representative meeting in Omsk between Russian and Kazakhstan governmental

<sup>24</sup> *Ekonomika i Zhizn'*, 22.10.92.

<sup>25</sup> *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 10.10.92.

<sup>26</sup> Nazarbayev: CIS Leaders Should "Carry Out Divorce" at Minsk in Civilised Manner, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 21.12.92.

<sup>27</sup> Nazarbayev, N., *Na poroge XXI veka*, pp. 144-145.

<sup>28</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report, No. 244, 21.12.92

<sup>29</sup> Reuters News Service, 19.12.92.

<sup>30</sup> *Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 47-48.

delegations with participation by the heads of adjacent provinces of both countries. The Kazakhstan delegation was led by Prime Minister Tereshchenko. The sides agreed to coordinate their actions in pricing, monetary, credit, fiscal and customs policy, and support for entrepreneurial activity. The Joint communique emphasised that "closeness of the two countries and long-term cooperation of their economies are a solid basis for strengthening integration processes and helping to overcome difficulties of the transitional period".<sup>31</sup> After the meeting Tereshchenko stressed the significance of "economic cooperation" and expressed the hope that customs barriers between the two countries would be lifted and the problem of mutual payments between enterprises solved.<sup>32</sup>

The importance of the Omsk meeting was that it preceded the CIS summit in Minsk, at which Nazarbayev hoped to have his integration program finally approved. In preparation for the summit, he tried to secure maximum political support. On 4 January 1993 he attended a summit of Central Asian leaders in Tashkent. Its declared purpose was inter-regional economic cooperation in Central Asia, but actually the emphasis was on economic cooperation within the entire CIS. Expressing his colleagues' shared opinion, Nazarbayev stressed at a press conference that their support of the rouble zone would be conditional on the rouble being a supranational currency, on creation of a banking union consisting of executives of all the republics' central banks, each having one vote, and if a common investment policy were established. An alternative to CIS integration was also discussed, including setting up a separate Central Asian economic grouping. Nazarbayev said that given certain conditions, it was entirely possible to form a regional market, and went as far as hinting at the possibility of a military alliance of the Central Asian states. The Central Asian leaders believed such a grouping would reorient itself from the CIS toward the Asian world, initially Iran and Turkey, building routes through their territories for export of raw materials.<sup>33</sup>

The decisions taken at the summit had little practical meaning. The participants simply instructed their governments "to study questions involving pricing policy, development of transportation and communication lines, and provision of energy resources".<sup>34</sup> This lack of results and plethora of general declarations was a clear sign that the Tashkent conference was designed less for fostering Central Asian inter-regional cooperation than for an outside audience. The notion of creating a Central Asian bloc with close links to Iran and Turkey was obviously meant to pressure Russia into concessions over financial policy.

It is difficult to say to what extent Nazarbayev's diplomatic manoeuvres influenced Russia's position, but the Minsk summit of 22 January 1993 displayed some results in economic matters. The participants agreed to establish a CIS Interstate Bank, and endorsed CIS Charter.<sup>35</sup> The latter provided for establishment

<sup>31</sup> Communique of Results of Russo-Kazakh meeting in Omsk, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 12.01.93.

<sup>32</sup> Kazakh and Russian Premiers on Omsk Meeting, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 12.01.93.

<sup>33</sup> Trud, 06.01.93.

<sup>34</sup> Nezavisimaya gazeta, 05.01.93.

<sup>35</sup> The Charter was initially signed by Russia, Kazakhstan, Armeniya, Belarus, Tadjikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

of a Coordination and Consultative Committee (CCC) as a CIS permanent executive body, and of an Economic Court.<sup>36</sup> All these proposals accorded with Nazarbayev's program. But the summit's decisions fell far short of Nazarbayev's hopes. Russia still rejected CIS control of rouble emission, and the Interstate Bank was set up in the form suggested by Moscow. Its role was limited to facilitating trade and clearing between member states, and coordinating the monetary-credit policies of the participating countries. The bank's governing body was its council, comprising one representative from each member with a correspondent account. Settlements were to be in roubles issued by the Russian Central Bank, and clearing settlements in freely convertible or other currency. The bank's initial statutory capital of 5 billion roubles was to be contributed by the members.<sup>37</sup>

The Interstate Bank Charter, signed by all ten CIS members, specified that Russia would contribute more capital than other CIS states, and would have 50 per cent of its shares, but decisions required a two-thirds majority.<sup>38</sup> The voting arrangements confirmed Russia's central role in implementing monetary policy in the CIS. Other CIS states received a guarantee that Russia would be unable to impose decisions against their combined will, but correspondingly they could not impose their combined will on Russia. In general, the voting procedure simply institutionalised the status quo: Russia could continue to frame its monetary policies more or less as it wished. More importantly, the Interstate Bank had no power to re-establish a single rouble space. The republics made so many amendments to the draft charter that they emasculated the very idea of coordinating credit and monetary policy. In creating the bank, none of the CIS countries seriously thought of making their national banks coordinate credit and currency-emission policy with it. Thus the provision for coordination remained on paper. Vice-Chairman of the Russian Central Bank Solovov commented that the Interstate Bank would not even be able to solve the painfully urgent problem of settling accounts between enterprises in different republics. The only sphere in which it could play a certain role was in organising account-settling operations under intergovernmental agreements.<sup>39</sup> The emerging monetary environment had no parallels in world practice. A number of republics were using their own variously-weighted roubles in non-cash transactions, but in cash circulation they were using a common rouble. Meanwhile Russia undertook to continue supplying cash to other CIS states. Thus, the difference between the cash and non-cash roubles was continuing to grow. This was against all economic logic, and fraught with serious complications for relations between members of the zone. Given the CIS leaders' lack of political will to limit the sovereignty of their states, the rouble zone was doomed.

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<sup>36</sup> Ustav Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gossudarstv // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 271, 273.

<sup>37</sup> Banking - CIS Interstate Bank, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 29.01.93.

<sup>38</sup> Reuters News Service, 22.01.93.

<sup>39</sup> Izvestiya, 25.01.93.

After the relatively unimpressive results of the Minsk summit, Nazarbayev tried to find a way of preserving the rouble zone by uniting a narrower circle of participants, naming Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Uzbekistan as potential members of a tighter-knit group. On 26 February he arrived in Moscow and discussed this with Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin. Speaking after a meeting with Chernomyrdin, Nazarbayev said that the two countries' leaderships "steadfastly support integration processes in the Commonwealth". "The countries which want to enter the rouble zone must reach agreement and honour the single rules of the rouble zone", he continued, adding that he thought these rules should include a concerted credit, emission and tax policy. "They will have to sacrifice some of their sovereignty, in this case for the sake of improving the living standards of their peoples and strengthening the rouble".<sup>40</sup> This was probably the first time that Nazarbayev referred to self-limitation of sovereignty. Previously he had spoken only of strengthening Kazakhstan's sovereignty.

On 27 February Nazarbayev met Yeltsin, and they agreed on a joint communique supporting early ratification of the CIS Charter adopted at the Minsk summit, calling for implementation of decisions on the Interstate Bank and CCC. They reiterated their support for the rouble zone, and agreed to take additional joint action in the field of monetary emission, budget policy and taxation, and resolved to pursue a coordinated customs policy. Kazakhstan's Deputy Prime Minister Daulet Sembayev told a press conference that customs duties would be introduced for the first time ever in bilateral trade; that was why it was vital for Russian and Kazakh businesses to "update their performance", and for the two governments to act to avert any possible misunderstandings.<sup>41</sup>

Sembayev's statement in fact disavowed all the many declarations in support of CIS integration made by the leaders of both countries. While talking of integration, they disengaged the national economies of Russia and Kazakhstan even more by introducing customs duties. Nevertheless the atmosphere of the meeting and some of the decisions taken there gave some impetus to the process of CIS integration. As Deputy Prime Minister Shokhin later revealed, "in March or thereabouts", Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan began confidential discussions on a possible deeper economic agreement within the CIS framework. Though these were initiated by Belorussian Prime Minister Kebich, the Kazakh leadership took an active part in them. According to Shokhin, "instead of trying to agree with all the states on the provisions of various documents, and implementing them immediately, we tried to show how cooperation should be built in reality", and "the states which were sincerely interested in deepening integration and economic cooperation could best do this".<sup>42</sup> Thus the idea of a CIS economic union was born.

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<sup>40</sup> Russia and Kazakhstan Agree on Closer Economic and Military Cooperation, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 03.03.93.

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>42</sup> Shokhin on Economic Union's History, Details and Prospects, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 16.07.93.

Yeltsin and Nazarbayev agreed at this meeting to coordinate moves to strengthen the CIS, and this became clear from their subsequent actions. On 17 March Yeltsin advanced a set of proposals for closer CIS integration. In a declaration read out by Foreign Minister Kozyrev, Yeltsin described the association of former Soviet republics as amorphous and "unable to fulfil the hopes invested in it". He said the move was primarily intended both to address the burgeoning conflicts on Russia's borders, and to establish some financial discipline over those states which remained in the rouble zone. Kozyrev said the initiative was designed to increase economic cooperation, in particular through creation of "modern market techniques of integration" - setting up multinational companies, and encouraging investment in each other's projects.<sup>43</sup>

The next day Nazarbayev sent a telegram to Yeltsin stating his support for "strengthening the commonwealth, deepening economic reforms and democratic changes". Similar telegrams were sent to the heads of states which had signed the CIS Charter. Nazarbayev proposed to hold in late March or early April a summit of the CIS states which had signed the Charter, to discuss such issues as: ensuring a viable economic space, single supra-national currency, free trade and a customs union; forming an interstate economic committee to which the states would delegate the necessary powers; and drawing up principles for relations with states which were not signatories to the CIS Charter.<sup>44</sup>

The summit was held a little later than proposed, on 16 April 1993, in Minsk, was the result of a combined Russian-Kazakh initiative, and was devoted exclusively to CIS integration. Russia and Kazakhstan acted in unison, presenting similar proposals, obviously agreed beforehand. The leading role, of course, was assigned to Yeltsin. He gave an explicit speech, advocating a number of initiatives in various fields of CIS integration. He spoke in favour of coordinating foreign policy and setting up a CIS defence union, but devoted most of his speech to economic matters. He formally presented a concept of a CIS economic union, based on customs and currency unions. He warned that while Russia was ready to continue with talks on monetary union, in the end a decision had to be made on "either demarcating and creating our own monetary systems, or integrating... There is no third option: preserving the present situation would be dangerous for the economies of the commonwealth countries".<sup>45</sup> Nazarbayev also called for stronger economic links, a financial and currency union, coordinated credit and budget policies. He again raised the issue of setting up an economic coordination committee, but its implementation was postponed.<sup>46</sup>

The summit took no actual decision. But it was very important for Yeltsin, because of the internal political struggle in Russia, where he was locked in a deadly confrontation with parliament. Facing a referendum on his rule and political course,

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<sup>43</sup> Financial Times, 18.03.93.

<sup>44</sup> Nazarbayev Telegram to Yeltsin with Proposals for Strengthening CIS, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 26.03.93

<sup>45</sup> CIS Summit in Minsk - Yeltsin Proposes Greater Economic, Industrial and Military Integration, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 19.04.93.

<sup>46</sup> Reuters News Service, 17.04.93.

Yeltsin needed something to counter accusations of having been responsible for dissolving the USSR and failing to do enough for CIS integration. Suggestions worked out at secret negotiations with Nazarbayev and Kebich turned out useful for improving Yeltsin's political image. Nor was it accidental that the concept of Russian foreign policy approved by Yeltsin and made public in late April emphasised the importance of achieving the greatest possible integration among the former Soviet republics in all spheres, on the bases of voluntary participation and reciprocity. Moreover the concept treated attempts by outside forces to undermine the integrative processes in the CIS<sup>47</sup> as a threat to Russia's national security

On 25 April Yeltsin won his referendum. This diminished his enthusiasm for CIS integration. The CIS summit in Moscow on 14 May 1993 was held in a slightly different atmosphere from the previous one. Yeltsin declared that "the rouble zone has in fact collapsed", and suggested that other republics' debts to Russia be settled by transferring debts resulting from technical credits to an interstate debt, to be repaid according to internationally recognised norms. This was another step away from preserving the common CIS economic complex. Yeltsin claimed that Russia was "ready for setting up a currency union as an inalienable part of the economic alliance". However, he considered such an alliance impossible "without a uniform economic space, without an agreed strategy for economic reforms, without coordination of our actions in the sphere of economic policy". The first step towards creating an economic union should be a customs union, which would make it "possible to remove all barriers to movement of goods, capital and services". He advocated accelerating the setting up of the interstate bank, to make it operational before 1 October 1993.<sup>48</sup> The summit adopted a declaration "On Economic Cooperation", which called for establishment of an "economic union" within the CIS. But a treaty had first to be drafted, and then signed at the next CIS summit.

Nevertheless, Nazarbayev's assessment of the summit was explicitly positive, probably because it decided to go ahead with establishment of the CCC. The summit decided that the CCC would operate at the level of Deputy Prime Ministers for the Economy, and would be entrusted with coordinating and preparing documents and decisions in the economic, foreign policy and military fields. Nazarbayev hailed the concept of economic union, but warned that it should not be like the former Soviet-dominated Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, but rather like the European Community of equal, sovereign states. Another achievement of Nazarbayev was that the draft documents on the economic union contained a special protocol, signed by the heads of government, recommending deeper integration between the states remaining in the rouble zone.<sup>49</sup>

Nazarbayev's positive perception of the summit indicated that he probably had not grasped a major change in the political situation that took place between

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<sup>47</sup> *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 29.04.93.

<sup>48</sup> Yeltsin Speaks in Favour of Economic Integration, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 17.05.93.

<sup>49</sup> Yeltsin, Kravchuk and Nazarbayev Answer Journalists' Questions - Post Summit Press Conference, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 17.05.93.

April and May, even though Yeltsin's speech contained obvious indications of a political turnaround. Firstly, there was his declaration on the collapse of the "rouble zone" and the necessity to replace existing credit relations in the CIS with recognised international practices. Secondly, he proposed a "currency union", which might mean either a new definition of the rouble zone, or an arrangement that was new in principle. Thirdly, Yeltsin conditioned implementation of economic union on so many "ifs" as to make it virtually unfeasible in the conditions then prevailing in the CIS. Of course, Yeltsin could not change course by 180 degrees, because his opponents in parliament were still strong. So he continued to pay verbal tribute to CIS integration, while an absolutely different policy was simultaneously being hatched.

In June 1993 Russia informed all the other members of the rouble zone that it would no longer extend credit by means of Central Bank technical credits. Instead Moscow advised that from 1993 it would provide them with state credits, effectively equivalent to loans by foreign creditors. Among 800 billion roubles in such credits approved by the Duma for the forthcoming financial year, 150 billion was reserved for Kazakhstan.<sup>50</sup> At the same time Moscow demanded that the balances in correspondent accounts of other CIS countries in the Russian Central Bank be converted into state debt to Russia.

Russia's move was caused by its obvious inability and/or unwillingness to continue subsidising the other CIS republics at previous levels. Official Russian estimates showed that in 1992 the Russian Central Bank transferred 1.5 trillion roubles, equivalent to 8% of Russia's GDP, to other CIS members. In the first seven months of 1993 this increased to 2.3 trillion, mostly because of inflation, but in real terms roughly equal to the amount for the same period in 1992. Granting of credit to CIS republics accounted for 25% of Russia's inflation. Kazakhstan was the second largest per capita recipient (after Turkmenistan) of Russian currency. In 1993 cash deliveries to Kazakhstan equalled 38,000 roubles per head, 30.1% higher than per capita emission in Russia. In 1992 Russian subsidies equalled 25.1%, and in January-July 1993 48.8% of Kazakhstan's GDP.<sup>51</sup>

On 16 June 1993 difficult negotiations were held in Moscow between Tereshchenko and Russian Deputy Prime Ministers Fedorov and Shokhin. They resulted in signing of an agreement on monetary-credit relations in 1993 and on the size of Kazakhstan's debt to Russia in 1992. Kazakhstan acknowledged debts of 247 billion roubles for 1992, and this sum was defined as Kazakhstan's state debt to Russia. The signatories also noted that Russian state enterprises owed 78.5 billion roubles more to their Kazakhstan counterparts than Kazakhstan enterprises owed to their Russian equivalents, and that this difference might be used to offset part of Kazakhstan's state debt.

Kazakhstan undertook that its cash emission in the forthcoming quarter would not exceed 15% of the Russian emission for that period. But the negotiators

<sup>50</sup> Megapolis-Express, 28.07.93.

<sup>51</sup> Izvestiya, 16.09.93.



failed to settle the issue of Kazakhstan's debt to Russia for January - April 1993, and decided to postpone the matter until signing of a bilateral agreement, due before 1 October 1993, on coordinated financial, monetary-credit and currency policy, based on use of the Russian rouble as the legal tender in Kazakhstan. If the agreement was not signed by that date, they would conclude another agreement on terms and periods of Kazakhstan's repayment of the Russian state credit.<sup>52</sup> That provision was a blatant example of Russia trying to use the debt-credit issue as leverage to force Kazakhstan, and, implicitly, other CIS states, to accept common rules of monetary policy established in Moscow.

According to Tereshchenko, the key disagreement at the negotiations was that Almaty was willing, but Moscow was not, to take responsibility for debts incurred by state-owned enterprises. It was not therefore accidental that the provision on enterprise debts was subjectively formulated. The Russians allegedly told their Kazakhstan counterparts to settle all questions of enterprise debt via the economic courts. Russia also put forward special terms for provision of credits in 1993, effectively equating them with loans by foreign creditors.<sup>53</sup> As a result Kazakhstan refused to sign an agreement on state-to-state credits, and remained the only rouble zone country without such an agreement. Probably the major reason for Kazakhstan's refusal was the very modest credit of 150 billion roubles reserved for it.

After Tereshchenko's return Nazarbayev promptly arranged a conference, which took place in Almaty on 21 June, on the economic situation in Kazakhstan and the state of credit and monetary relations within the CIS. The conference was attended by members of the government, heads of province administrations, chairmen of parliamentary committees, and executives of banks and major industrial enterprises. Summing up its results, Nazarbayev said that he had no radical change of policy in mind; "whether we want it or not the integration processes will continue". At the same time he emphasised the need for urgent steps to reduce Kazakhstan's dependence on imports, improve product quality to equal that of imported goods, introduce tough control over the use of strategic raw materials, and elaborate a specific action plan to meet the current difficult conditions. Nazarbayev recommended that Kazakhstan's enterprises satisfy the republic's needs first of all, before entering into cooperation with foreign partners, by which he obviously meant Russian firms.<sup>54</sup> According to Shokhin, the Kazakh government sent telegrams to major enterprises ordering them to cease sending goods to Russia and other CIS states.<sup>55</sup>

In addition, Nazarbayev prepared a diplomatic offensive. For this he used the second meeting of heads of state and government of the Organisation for

<sup>52</sup> Soglashenie o denezhno-kreditnykh otnosheniyakh v 1993 godu i o razmere zadolzhennosti Respubliki Kazakhstan po tekhnicheskomu kreditu po rezultatam torgovo-ekonomicheskikh otnosheniy s Rossiyskoy Federatsiey za 1992, Moscow [No publisher] 1993, pp. 1-3.

<sup>53</sup> Izvestiya, 23.06.93.

<sup>54</sup> President and Premier Address Meeting on Economy and Relations with Russia, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 07.07.93.

<sup>55</sup> Megapolis-Express, 28.07.93.

Economic Cooperation (OEC) in Istanbul on 7 July. This summit was a convenient occasion to put political pressure on Russia, because it united all the post-Soviet Central Asian states with three non-CIS Muslim countries, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Nazarbayev's speech at the summit was shrewdly constructed. He did not miss a chance to mention Russia and CIS as potential OEC partners, but at the same time constantly emphasised the trade and economic advantages of Kazakhstan's cooperation with OEC, and spoke very strongly in favour of new transport and pipeline routes to link Kazakhstan with the Persian Gulf through Iran, and with the Mediterranean through Turkey. Thus Nazarbayev obviously tried not to overdo things, but to warn Moscow of the possible repercussions of disengagement from Kazakhstan. Not accidentally, the summit's final communique referred to "giving priority to creation of an effective infrastructure network that not only links the OEC member-states, but also gives them access to other parts of the world".<sup>56</sup>

This time, however, the Russians did not hesitate to call Nazarbayev's bluff. The counterblow came on 10 July, when the Prime Ministers of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus signed a joint statement on urgent measures for closer economic relations. It said that they still remained committed to the treaty on CIS economic union, but "believe that measures for closer trilateral integration of their economies will help accelerate the implementation of this treaty's goals and principles". Deputy prime ministers were instructed to prepare by 1 September 1993 a draft treaty on deepening economic integration among the three republics.<sup>57</sup> The event was later shown to be purely declaratory, but initially the fact that Kazakhstan was neither consulted about nor invited to the meeting seemed a serious rebuff, seeing that Nazarbayev had been a very active proponent of the concept of economic union.

The Slav republics' trilateral accord caused bewilderment in Kazakh government circles, especially after Russian Deputy Prime Minister Shokhin explained Russia's move at a press conference on 13 July. Shokhin said that the decision at the trilateral summit was the result of news from Turkey that a customs union, a common market in goods, capital, services and manpower, and a single bank were being established within the OEC framework, and "Since Kazakhstan has decided to enter a Customs Union with Turkey, it can no longer join our union".<sup>58</sup> Shokhin's statement drew a harsh response from Almaty. State Counsellor Zhukeyev said, that "Shokhin's attempt to attribute what happened to 'the desire of the Central Asian states to create an economic union with Turkey and Pakistan' is tactless, to put it mildly. And his suggestion that Kazakhstan and the other CIS partners chose between entering one of these two economic unions simply does not stand up to any common-sense criticism - if only because in Istanbul there was no discussion at all about creation of an economic union...". In addition Zhukeyev ascribed to Shokhin something he never said, that Russia

<sup>56</sup> *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 14.07.93.

<sup>57</sup> *Izvestiya*, 13.07.93.

<sup>58</sup> *Megapolis-Express*, 28.07.93.

intended to block the setting up of a free transportation system in Asia and "restrict the Central Asian states' possibilities for future free development".<sup>59</sup>

The Russian move caused genuine concern in Almaty, not least because it was very reminiscent of the Belovezhskaya Puschha agreement, when the three Slavic republics had easily dissolved the Soviet Union, without inviting or even consulting Kazakhstan, and could be taken to imply that it was now the CIS' turn for dissolution. In all Kazakhstan's diplomatic position was substantially weakened. Thus Nazarbayev's bluff in Istanbul backfired, and gave Moscow a convenient justification for putting an end to the rouble zone. On 22 July he made a gesture of rapprochement to Moscow, when his press service released a statement entitled "Kazakhstan is for Economic Partnership". The statement said it was important "to overcome the individual differences in approaches to interstate economic cooperation that were reflected in conclusion of a treaty on economic alliance by the governments of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine", denied that there were any "undercurrents" with regard to Kazakhstan's membership in CIS and "trade and economic cooperation with the countries of the Asian continent", and insisted that the recent OEC meeting was to "serve the interests not only of Central Asia, but of the entire CIS".<sup>60</sup>

But this was too little too late. Those members of the Russian government who were suspicious of Kazakhstan's and other Central Asian states' intentions with regard to the rouble zone got the upper hand in the internal struggle, and succeeded in portraying Kazakhstan and other republics which took part in the OEC conference as disloyal to the CIS. Obviously not all their suspicions were groundless. Besides Nazarbayev's declarations, which were most probably a diplomatic game, there were other worrying facts. As later revealed by Shokhin, Moscow knew that at the July OEC conference Nazarbayev, Karimov and Niyazov had agreed on simultaneous introduction of national currencies.<sup>61</sup> Moscow probably also knew that Kazakhstan had already ordered printing of its national currency in Britain, although it was among Nazarbayev's most closely-guarded secrets. Combination of these facts could lead Russia's leadership to conclude that Kazakhstan's participation in the rouble zone was a tactic to get maximum advantage from Russian credits, then at a convenient moment to introduce a national currency, leaving Russia to bear the economic consequences of the move.

On 26 July Russia introduced new types of rouble banknotes, which was tantamount to introducing its own separate currency. All CIS states had stocks of the old notes, but could obtain new ones only on the basis of state-to-state credits or through sales to Russia. Now Kazakhstan and all other rouble zone states faced a very restricted choice: either to opt for their own currency, or to agree to Russia's conditions. Nazarbayev decided to keep both options open. On the same day he ordered Kazakhstan's National Bank to accelerate the printing of the entire amount of national currency. Simultaneously he telephoned Chernomyrdin, and

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<sup>59</sup> *Izvestiya*, 15.07.93.

<sup>60</sup> *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 22.07.93. [Formal Central Bank announcement was made on 24 July 1992].

<sup>61</sup> *Moskovskie novosti*, 21.11.93.

asked when Kazakhstan would get the new roubles. Chernomyrdin said "very soon", and Russian Central Bank Chairman Gerashchenko confirmed that he was only waiting for orders to release them.<sup>62</sup> In Akmola on 19 August Nazarbayev announced that Kazakhstan was technically prepared to leave the rouble zone, but that he believed it would be more profitable to stay in it.<sup>63</sup>

Very probably Moscow wanted to use the question of providing Kazakhstan with new banknotes as a negotiating tool to force Kazakhstan into concessions on outstanding issues of economic cooperation. On 29 July two agreements on settling debt and credit matters between Russia and Kazakhstan were signed in Moscow. The first dealt with rearrangement of Kazakhstan's debts into state debt to Russia. Kazakhstan acknowledged 300 billion roubles in debt for the period January-May 1993 and agreed to its conversion into state debt to Russia. Thus Kazakhstan's debt to Russia for 1992-1993 was established at 547.6 billion roubles, confirmed as equivalent to \$1.25 billion. The state credit was to be paid off within 1996-2000 by quarterly instalments.<sup>64</sup> The second agreement "On State Credit in 1993" allotted Kazakhstan the above-mentioned 150 billion rouble credit, to be paid off during 1995-1997.<sup>65</sup> Both agreements provided a very mild repayment regime.

The credit for 1993 was substantially less than Kazakhstan had previously obtained through the Russian Central Bank, especially if high inflation and the steady fall in the rouble's value are taken into account. But the most important thing for Moscow was that both agreements ensured transformation of Russian-Kazakh financial relations into normal inter-state relations, a necessary precondition not for unification but for divorce of monetary systems. The agreements also equipped Moscow with a powerful instrument of influence over Kazakhstan, as if preparing the ground for a future dependent relationship.

On 7 August Yeltsin met Nazarbayev and Uzbek President Karimov in Moscow, and they adopted a joint statement favouring setting up "a common monetary system with the Russian Federation by using the rouble". They instructed their governments and central banks to hold "special negotiations within a period of two weeks to consider general and technical questions of setting up a collective monetary system", and "to sign an agreement on practical measures to set up a new kind of rouble zone". Other CIS members were invited to participate in the agreement.<sup>66</sup> On 11-12 August Gerashchenko and Mashits, Chairman of Russia's State Committee for CIS Economic Cooperation, made a hasty visit to Almaty,

<sup>62</sup> Nazarbayev, N., *Na poroge XXI veka*, p. 145.

<sup>63</sup> Kazakh President Visits Akmola Oblast; Talks of Rouble Zone and Grain Harvest, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 28.08.93.

<sup>64</sup> *Soglasenie mezhdru Pravitel'stvom Rossiyskoy Federatsii i Pravitel'stvom Respubliki Kazakhstan o pereformlenii zadolzhennosti po technicheskim kreditam po itogam 1992 goda i yanvarya-iyunya 1993 g. v gosudarstvenniy kredit Pravitel'stvu respubliki Kazakhstan*, Moscow [No publisher] 1993, pp. 1-2.

<sup>65</sup> *Soglasenie mezhdru Pravitel'stvom Rossiyskoy Federatsii i Pravitel'stvom Respubliki Kazakhstan o gosudarstvennom kredite na 1993 god*, Moscow [No publisher] 1993, pp. 1-2.

<sup>66</sup> Statement on New Monetary System Involving Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 10.08.93.

where they held meetings with the Kazakh government and National Bank on creating a Kazakh-Russian monetary system. In particular, they discussed the general concept of a new-type rouble zone, and settled the problem of urgent cash deliveries to Kazakhstan.<sup>67</sup>

At that time some Kazakh experts began expressing concern that Russia's conditions for creating a common monetary system and providing Kazakhstan with 1993 banknotes were difficult to meet. Some doubts were expressed by Nazarbayev himself. At the republican conference of local leaders in Akmola on 19 August he made it clear that it would infringe Kazakhstan's sovereignty if Russia set terms which obliged Kazakhstan to receive new rouble banknotes as credit, and to coordinate its budget, taxation and investment policies with Russia's Central Bank, and said that it was for Kazakhstan's parliament to decide how much of its sovereignty Kazakhstan might delegate to Russia.<sup>68</sup> The next day these concerns were echoed by Baynazarov, Head of Kazakhstan's National Bank, who complained that Russia's conditions, if accepted, would virtually turn Kazakhstan's National Bank into a branch of the Central Bank of Russia. He also said that parliamentary approval was needed for joining a Russian rouble zone.<sup>69</sup> However, on 20 August Nazarbayev met Yeltsin in Moscow, and signed the second declaration that Kazakhstan would stay in the rouble zone. According to Nazarbayev, by that time Kazakhstan had already changed its customs and financial laws and the law on the National Bank to comply with Russia's demands.<sup>70</sup>

On 7 September representatives of the governments and central banks of Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Belarus and Armenia signed a document "On practical measures to establish a new-style rouble zone", to be approved by their parliaments. The agreement referred to the signatories' desire for "a common monetary system using the Russian Federation rouble as the legal means of payment". It envisaged strict coordination of monetary, credit, interest and customs policy, and involved changes in the member countries' legislation. Once implemented, access to the Russian rouble as sole legal tender would be open. Bilateral agreements were to define the conditions of the new rouble zone, and mechanisms for harmonising and unifying legislation on monetary and credit relations. They were to be followed by a comprehensive multilateral treaty on economic union, scheduled for signing on 24 September at the CIS summit in Moscow.<sup>71</sup> Nazarbayev was evidently satisfied with the deal. Before leaving Moscow on 7 September he told journalists his visit had not been in vain, and had convinced him that there was no alternative to integration. He underlined that the

<sup>67</sup> Russia's Central Bank Chairman Holds Talks in Alma-Ata, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 14.08.93.

<sup>68</sup> Kazakh President Visits Akmola Oblast; Talks Of Rouble Zone And Grain Harvest, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 28.08.93.

<sup>69</sup> Bank Head Says Too Early For Republic To Introduce National Currency, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 02.09.93.

<sup>70</sup> Nazarbayev, N., Na poroge XXI veka, p. 146.

<sup>71</sup> Text of Six CIS States' agreement on a "New-Style Rouble-Zone", BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 08.09.93.

states needed at least a month and a half to abandon old roubles and introduce temporary coupons or other monetary units.<sup>72</sup>

On 23 September in Moscow the Prime Ministers of Russia and Kazakhstan signed a bilateral agreement on unification of their monetary systems. Kazakhstan was the last of the five participants in the rouble zone to do so. Answering journalists' questions after the ceremony Tereshchenko noted that the agreement was very important for stabilising the economic situation in his republic.<sup>73</sup> The strange thing about this agreement was that the next day saw the signing in Moscow of another document which to some extent contradicted it. On 24 September the treaty "On Creation of Economic Union" was signed by all CIS members except for Ukraine and Turkmenistan, which joined it as "associate members".<sup>74</sup> The treaty defined aims and principles of the economic union, codified trade relations, entrepreneurial and investment activities, dealt with monetary, financial and currency issues, social policies and legal regulation of economic relations. It provided for "free movement of goods, services, capital and labour; coordinated monetary-credit, budget, taxation, prices, foreign economic, customs and currency policies; harmonisation of national economic legislation of the contracting parties; common statistical base". The treaty envisaged creation of the economic union in four stages: free trade association, customs union, common market of goods, services and labour, and finally monetary union.<sup>75</sup> Thus the treaty regarded monetary union not as the initial but as the final stage of economic integration, and scarcely achievable in the immediate future.

True, Article 15 established that at the stage of free trade association the parties would use in their monetary-credit and financial relations either a "multi-currency system, embracing national currencies circulating in individual states" or "a system based on the Russian Federation rouble". Thus in principle the treaty did not exclude the possibility of a number of CIS members using the Russian rouble at the first, lowest stage of economic integration. But the irony was that even this lowest stage in Russian-Kazakh integration had not yet been achieved, and it was far from clear when it would be. The treaty itself did not introduce a free trade zone, because it was only a framework document, and envisaged that "for each form of integration" special agreements on substance should be reached and practical measures implemented. In expert assessment, to implement the treaty's provisions, the sides would have to sign more than thirty special agreements. Most of such agreements remained unsigned or unratified for at least two years.<sup>76</sup> Thus

<sup>72</sup> Nazarbayev Convinced That There Is No Alternative to Integration, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 11.09.93.

<sup>73</sup> Russia and Kazakhstan Sign Agreement on Rouble Zone and Use of Nuclear Power, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 27.09.93.

<sup>74</sup> *Izvestiya*, 25.11.93.

<sup>75</sup> *Dogovor o sozdanii Ekonomicheskogo soyuza // Kazakhstansko-Rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 335-338.*

<sup>76</sup> Puzanov, Yu., Khromov, Yu., *Perspektivy razvitiya integratsionnykh protsessov v ramkakh SNG (Prospects for development of integrative processes with the CIS framework) // Novaya Evraziya, No.4, 1995, p. 69.*

the treaty provisions were in obvious contradiction with the ongoing negotiations on monetary union between Russia and Kazakhstan.

This contradiction supports the argument that Yeltsin and his entourage did not take the economic union treaty and rouble zone agreements seriously, regarding them not as instruments for real integration but as propaganda ploys in the domestic political struggle. The Kazakhs did not know, any more than the majority of government officials in Russia and the other CIS states, that the above documents had already become an element in a subtle combination prepared by Yeltsin for his showdown with the Duma. It was not accidental that their solemn signing in Moscow coincided with Yeltsin's controversial decree of 21 September dissolving parliament. The situation was similar to that in April preceding the Russian referendum, but now the stakes were much higher. Yeltsin intended to move beyond constitutional bounds, because he had no legal power to dissolve parliament. To boost his popularity, and refute opposition claims that he was betraying Russian interests, Yeltsin needed to demonstrate real achievements in CIS integration.

But the parliament fought back, and on 3-4 October armed clashes took place between its supporters and Interior Ministry troops. Then tanks shelled the parliament building. Yeltsin who enjoyed the loyalty of the army command won the confrontation. The parliament was dispersed, and gone with it were the majority of Eurasianists in Russia's leadership. The October events were an unequivocal victory for ethnic nationalists. A week later a new tone of Russian policy was readily apparent. On 11 October Finance Minister Fyodorov was already saying he feared his country's currency could be weakened by a too-hasty expansion of the rouble zone.<sup>77</sup> After that Russia put forward tough new conditions for providing new banknotes to Kazakhstan, insisting that the cash was to be given as a state credit for six months, with normal interest established by the Russian Central Bank, and Kazakhstan was to make a deposit equal to 50% of the credit. If however in six months Russia was satisfied that Kazakhstan's economy was ready for joint functioning with Russia's the deposit would be returned, the interest foregone, and the credit would not have to be repaid. Russia's second condition was that Kazakhstan should not introduce a national currency within five years.<sup>78</sup> Kazakhstan perceived the new conditions as exceptionally harsh, and as deliberately aimed at ensuring failure of the negotiations. Deputy Prime Minister Sembayev stated in an interview that "principally new conditions unexpectedly presented by Russia" were "purposefully designed to be unacceptable". He felt Kazakhstan was simply being "pushed out of the rouble zone".<sup>79</sup>

On 26 October Shokhin arrived in Almaty and met Nazarbayev. Their negotiations were difficult. Shokhin sincerely asked Nazarbayev what would be the advantage for Kazakhstan "of jumping into the last carriage of the departing Russian train". According to Nazarbayev's own account he was outraged, and

<sup>77</sup> Reuters News Service, 11.10.93.

<sup>78</sup> *Moskovskie novosti*, 21.11.93.

<sup>79</sup> *Izvestiya*, 03.11.93.

asked Shokhin if he had authority from Chernomyrdin to negotiate? Shokhin did, and told Nazarbayev that Kazakhstan could not be in the rouble zone.<sup>80</sup> Shokhin's account indicates that not everything was that straightforward. When he asked Nazarbayev if he could give a 100% guarantee that Kazakhstan would not introduce its own currency within a year, Nazarbayev allegedly replied that he could not.<sup>81</sup> The rouble zone was no longer feasible.

On 28 October Kazakhstan's parliament gave Nazarbayev power to introduce a national currency. In a secret operation four hired cargo aircraft brought 60% of the new currency from London.<sup>82</sup> In a TV address on 12 November Nazarbayev announced introduction of the national currency, the tenge, from 8 a.m. on 15 November. The rouble zone collapsed, highlighting another stage in the process of separation of the CIS states. This event received contradictory interpretations in Kazakhstan and Russia. Recalling those dramatic days Nazarbayev said in a recent interview: "The Russian government's economic egotism manifested itself in the first place in abolishing the common currency, common economic complex. This did irreparable damage first of all to the integrative processes... I did everything possible and impossible to keep Kazakhstan in the common monetary and technological space with Russia and other CIS states. But alas, the vector of Russian development was pointed in a different direction".<sup>83</sup> Strangely, in his memoirs Nazarbayev gave a slightly different interpretation. He said that Shokhin had been "probably right at that moment". "Building your statehood, it is impossible to do without your own currency. Sooner or later it should have been introduced".<sup>84</sup> A similar view is voiced by Mansurov, Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Moscow: "...When Kazakhstan and Russia - two independent states... are not united into a common form of statehood, be it federation or confederation, the single rouble could exist only for a certain transitional period with the objective of mitigating the destructive consequences of the collapse of the overcentralised state which the Soviet Union was".<sup>85</sup> Thus Mansurov recognised the objective nature of the break-up of the rouble zone in the absence of a common union statehood.

In fact, such a break-up was an inevitable outcome of the policies conducted by ethnic nationalists in both countries. Each side was thinking not so much of integration, but of extracting maximum benefit for itself at its partner's expense. Russia's interest in "integration" was determined by primarily political considerations - maintaining indirect control of the periphery through economic means, but as cheaply as possible. Kazakhstan's primary interest lay in the field of economic policies - getting cheap Russian credits and living on them without

<sup>80</sup> Nazarbayev, N., Na poroge XXI veka, pp. 146-147.

<sup>81</sup> Moskovskie novosti, 21.11.93.

<sup>82</sup> Nazarbayev, N., Na poroge XXI veka, p. 147.

<sup>83</sup> Nezavisimaya gazeta, 16.01.97.

<sup>84</sup> Nazarbayev, N., Na poroge XXI veka, p. 147.

<sup>85</sup> Mansurov, T., Razvitie kazakhstansko-rossiyskikh otnosheniy v protsesse suverenizatsii Kazakhstana (1991-1995 gody), Avtoreferat dissertatsii na soiskanie uchenoy stepeni doktora politicheskikh nauk, Moskva: Institut Rossiyskoy Istorii, 1996, pp. 27-28.



putting much effort into economic revival, and at the same time maintaining full independence from Moscow. Domestic politics were also important, since both Yeltsin and Nazarbayev experienced serious political pressure for integration, and could not simply reject the idea without damaging their political standing. Consequently an impression of active integrative interactions was created, with each playing into the other's hand. But when the process reached the point where real decisions had to be made, both sides showed a lack of desire to cooperate.

On 22 March 1994 Nazarbayev announced his most conspicuous integration initiative - the project for an Eurasian Union (EAU). At the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London he said that the need had matured for reform of the CIS itself, to provide for creation in this region of a belt of stability and security". He suggested reviving the CIS as a Eurasian Union of sovereign states, drawing on both the European Union and British Commonwealth as models.<sup>86</sup> Nazarbayev did not clarify why he chose London for advancing his initiative. Probably he wanted to test both Western and Russian reactions on the eve of a crucial meeting with Yeltsin scheduled for 28 March. But if this was Nazarbayev's intention, he failed, because no substantial reaction followed either from Russia or from Western capitals, and he had no alternative but to use opportunities provided by his visit to Moscow to promote his initiative. He actively publicised it at meetings with academicians and students of Moscow State University, businessmen and intelligentsia at the Moscow Mayor's Office, and chief editors of leading Russian newspapers.

He explained the motives behind the EAU concept by his concern that the CIS was turning into an organisation for "civilised divorce", and that attempts "to channel the process along the route of integration" had failed. His dissatisfaction was founded on two premises. Firstly, "political dynamics" had begun to damage "not only the obsolete and economically invalid forms" of relations between the former Soviet republics, but also "quite rational and mutually beneficial links". Secondly, attempts for prompt integration with other economic groupings and "hopes for foreign aid" had not succeeded. "The EAU project was prepared taking account of the fact that in the near future CIS countries would not join developed economic blocs as equal partners".

He disclosed that he had reached the conclusion that CIS integrative processes must be activated "only after extensive study of the experience of other international associations, analysis of the situation in the CIS states and consultations with experts". He argued that the lack of success in CIS integration was a result of a misconceived notion of integration, which was interpreted as contradicting and even threatening national sovereignty. But he believed sovereignty and integration were "interconnected" notions, "not excluding, but augmenting each other",<sup>87</sup> and advocated "combining the process of national-state

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<sup>86</sup> Times, 23.03.94.

<sup>87</sup> Nazarbayev, N., Na poroge XXI veka, pp. 102-103, 108.

construction with preservation and development on this basis of inter-state integrative processes".<sup>88</sup>

The EAU project, which was published on 6-8 June 1994 in Kazakhstan and Russia, started from the assumption that the existing CIS structure "did not allow for full realisation of the integrative potential" of the former Soviet republics. At the same time previous experience of CIS' performance "showed the need to move to a new level of integration, which would guarantee fulfilment of jointly undertaken obligations by all member-states". While not excluding further improvement of CIS mechanisms, the plan suggested that the CIS "should not be regarded as the only form of unification". The formation of a Eurasian Union was seen as compatible with CIS and taking account of "multivariant integration, different tempos, non-homogeneity and divergence in the development of the CIS states".

The important element in the project was support for political integration. The document said: "Resolution of questions of economic integration dictates the need for setting up political institutions possessing ample authority. They must include functions for regulating relations between states in the economic, political, legal, ecological, cultural and educational spheres".<sup>89</sup> The new entity was regarded as an "economic, currency and political union". This represented a significant shift in Nazarbayev's position. Previously he had defined integration exclusively in economic terms.

The Eurasian Union was perceived as a union of "equal independent states", aimed at realisation of their national interests and "strengthening stability and security, social and economic modernisation in the post-Soviet space". It was to be achieved through referendums in countries wishing to join and subsequent signing of a treaty creating the union. Decisions in the EAU would require a four-fifths majority, another breakaway from CIS principles, where decisions required unanimity. The project also established preconditions for joining the EAU. They included: mandatory observance of international obligations; acceptance of the existing state and political institutions of EAU member-states; recognition of territorial integrity and inviolability of borders; repudiation of economic, political and other forms of pressure in inter-state relations; termination of military activities against each other. The project allowed EAU member-states to participate in other integrative associations, including CIS. Each member could leave the EAU on six months' notice.

The project provided for setting up what were termed "supranational" institutions. It named the Council of Heads of State and of Government as EAU's highest political authority. Chairmanship of EAU was to rotate at six-month intervals. In addition the union was to have a Council of Foreign Ministers for foreign policy coordination. The project envisaged an EAU legislature, described

<sup>88</sup> Proekt o formirovaniy Evraziyskogo Soyuzu Gosudarstv // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, p. 367.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., pp. 367-369.

as a "consultative and counselling body". Two ways of staffing it were suggested, either by "equal representation from each member state, or by way of direct elections". To be legally binding, the parliament's decisions would have to be ratified by the member-states' parliaments. Another proposed supranational structure was an Interstate Executive Committee, a "permanently functioning executive and controlling body". The proposal did not define its powers, specifying only that it should be composed of representatives of all member-states, and that its Chairmanship should rotate.

An interesting provision, reflecting Kazakh official policy, concerned citizenship. The project did not envisage common union citizenship, but suggested that persons changing their country of residence within EAU should be automatically granted citizenship of the receiving state. Another interesting proposal was for a capital of the new union, to be "a city at the juncture of Europe and Asia". The project named two possible candidates, both in Russia, Kazan, capital of Tatarstan, or Samara. In the economic field the project envisaged a number of "supranational coordinating structures": an Economic Commission under the Council of Heads of State and of Government, a Raw Materials Commission of EAU Exporter-States, a Fund for Affairs of Economic and Technical Cooperation, a Commission on Interstate Financial and Industrial Groups and Joint Ventures, International Investment Bank, Interstate Arbitrage, and a Commission on introduction of a new currency, the transferable rouble. The project also called for "creation of a common defence space aimed at coordinating defence activities", and made a number of proposals for cooperation in spheres such as science, culture, education and ecology.<sup>90</sup>

Nazarbayev's initiative received a positive reaction from a number of influential Russian politicians. On 30 March 1994 Shumeiko, Chairman of the Russian Federation Council and Head of the Council of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly, told journalists that recreating a new Union, not the former USSR, was quite possible, that it did not matter what it was called, but that it could be based on existing CIS institutions, such as the Council of Heads of State, Council of Heads of Government and Interparliamentary Assembly. He also expressed the opinion that supranational institutions would have to be established gradually, and that there could be discussion about united armed forces, a single monetary system, and abolition of borders.<sup>91</sup>

On 4 April, at a news conference at the State Duma, Shakhrai, Russia's Minister for Nationalities Affairs and Regional Policy, presented for discussion a draft confederation agreement for establishing a union of Eurasian states on the basis of the CIS. The draft envisaged a "confederative economic community", to ensure "revival and development of a common market of member countries as a single economic space without customs barriers... creation of a common currency and banking system, based on preservation of the national currencies of these

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., pp. 370-376.

<sup>91</sup> Federation Council Speaker Supports Nazarbayev's Idea of a Eurasian Union, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 01.04.94.

countries and the agreed principles of credit and monetary regulation". It also provided for setting up a community governmental committee, a defence union, "the basis of which would be formed by the members' national armies", a general political council, a security council and a court of the confederation. Shakhray proposed to form an international working group to compose a confederation treaty, made up of representatives of countries which were ready to join the Eurasian Union.<sup>92</sup> Kazakh Prime Minister Kazhegeldin appraised Shakhray's proposal as "similar to the EAU project in a whole number of provisions".<sup>93</sup>

But the Kremlin's reaction was much less enthusiastic. On 31 March Kostikov, Yeltsin's press secretary, described Nazarbayev's initiative as "unexpected". He said Yeltsin had heard about the EAU proposal with "reserved interest", and that Nazarbayev's idea was "geopolitically logical", but so were the CIS principles, "so there is hardly any need to replace one strong idea with another, though their mutual improvement would make sense". Kostikov said that Yeltsin reserved judgement until he had further studied the pros and cons of Nazarbayev's initiative.<sup>94</sup> Nazarbayev's project could at least serve as a basis for further negotiations, but this did not happen either. The official joint communique on Nazarbayev's visit to Moscow did not even mention the Eurasian Union. It said he and Yeltsin had discussed prospects for CIS development, that they welcomed the CIS' expansion through accession of new members, and saw this as evidence of growing understanding of the importance of multilateral cooperation within the CIS. They confirmed readiness to cooperate in further strengthening the CIS and increasing its efficiency, specifically by accelerating the formation of an economic alliance and strengthening the role of coordinating institutions.<sup>95</sup>

Thus it was only economic integration that Yeltsin was prepared to proceed with at that stage. This found reflection in the treaty "On Further Deepening of Economic Cooperation and Integration between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation", signed during Nazarbayev's visit. The treaty contained a number of general provisions which would need to be made more specific. It said that both countries would cooperate closely "in fulfilling economic integration, creating a joint economic space and forming a common market". (Article 1). They undertook to "steadily lower customs tariffs in mutual trade, taxes, duties and other tariff and non-tariff restrictions, make the transition to a joint trade regime in relations with third countries, unify economic legislation on the most acute issues of trade and economic relations, implement unification of customs tariffs, rules and procedures and customs documentation". (Article 3). The treaty contained an obligation to implement by the end of 1994 "conditions for transition from a free

<sup>92</sup> Shakhray Puts Forward Draft Eurasian Confederation Agreement, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 06.04.94.

<sup>93</sup> Kazhegeldin, A., "Evraziyskiy Soyuz": teoreticheskie diskussii i prakticheskie shagi // Vneshnyaya politika Kazakhstana, Sbornik statey, Almaty: MID Respubliki Kazakhstan, 1995, p. 19.

<sup>94</sup> Yeltsin's Reaction to Plans for Eurasian Union Described by Press Secretary, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 04.04.94.

<sup>95</sup> Russian and Kazakhstan Issue Joint Statement on Nazarbayev's Visit, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 05.04.94.

trade zone to creation of a fully-fledged Customs Union, taking into account steps taken in this field on a multilateral basis within the Economic Union".<sup>96</sup>

The EAU proposal was coolly received not only by Russia but by other CIS states as well, including Kazakhstan's closest allies from Central Asia. This was clearly revealed at the CIS summit in Minsk on 15 April, which Nazarbayev did not attend, allegedly for health reasons. At the meeting Nazarbayev's Central Asian counterparts were the first to criticise the concept of a Eurasian Union. Rahmonov, chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Tajikistan, said the EAU idea was good, but the CIS had not yet exhausted its possibilities and reserves. But the strongest criticism was voiced by Karimov, President of Uzbekistan. He stated that the concept of Eurasian Union "had no serious foundation", and "it would be incorrect to jettison the idea of strengthening the Commonwealth primarily via economic structures, via economic union, when we have only reached half-way, although we all put our signatures to this, and to put forward the new idea of a Eurasian Union. In general it smacks of populism".<sup>97</sup> Thus both leaders associated themselves with Yeltsin's position, not Nazarbayev's. Nobody supported Nazarbayev's plan.

Given the generally unfavourable reaction to the EAU project, it is perhaps surprising that Nazarbayev did not discard the initiative, but continued to advance it. On 3 June 1994 he officially forwarded a "Project for Formation of a Eurasian Union of States" to the CIS heads of state.<sup>98</sup> On 1 July Kazakhstan circulated a draft paper describing the EAU proposal as an official UN General Assembly document. The EAU initiative figured high on the agenda of the Uzbek-Kazakh-Kyrgyz summit in Almaty on 8 July. One of Nazarbayev's major objectives at this summit was to reverse his Central Asian colleagues' negative attitude to the EAU, and to use the occasion to promote it further. This aim was at least partially achieved. Karimov refrained from repeating his numerous previous criticisms of the EAU idea, and Akayev said at the press conference after the meeting that he was a supporter of the EAU initiative "first and foremost because I consider it as the final goal of our Commonwealth".<sup>99</sup>

Continuing his diplomatic offensive Nazarbayev also sought support from Belarus, the Slavic republic most disposed to CIS integration. On 11 August, while visiting the Ukrainian capital Kiev, Nazarbayev made a sudden telephone call to President Lukashenko of Belarus, and discussed further integration between the post-Soviet republics. Nazarbayev spoke about his idea of a Eurasian union and said that he saw Lukashenko as "an ally and partner in joint efforts aiming to achieve close integration among the CIS member-states".<sup>100</sup> But Lukashenko was

<sup>96</sup> Dogovor o dalneyshem uglublenii ekonomicheskogo sotrudnichestva i integratsii Respubliki Kazakhstan i Rossiyskoy Federatsii // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 150-151.

<sup>97</sup> CIS Leaders Give Press Conference on Results of Summit, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 18.04.94.

<sup>98</sup> Razvitie idei Evraziyskogo Soyuzu Gosudarstv // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, p. 378.

<sup>99</sup> Uzbek-Kazakh-Kyrgyz Summit Held in Alma-Ata, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 12.07.94.

<sup>100</sup> Belarussian and Kazakh Presidents Discuss Integration, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 15.08.94.

cautious, giving the opinion that when moving towards integration it was important to avoid "piling up of ideas" and to try to use all the CIS' potential possibilities.<sup>101</sup> Thus Nazarbayev failed to obtain Belorussian support.

On 19-21 September an international conference "The Eurasian Space: Integrative Potential and its Realisation", arranged by the Kazakh authorities, was held in Almaty. Nazarbayev himself addressed the conference, which was attended by 140 officials, politicians, diplomats, scholars, writers and publicists from several CIS countries. His Eurasian Union proposal was at the centre of attention, and many of the Russian politicians and public figures present voiced their approval of it. The final document adopted by the conference suggested "taking steps to strengthen the CIS' integrative potential, using the idea of Eurasian Union of states and other integration projects".<sup>102</sup> The conference was conveniently timed before the forthcoming CIS summit to give a boost to the EAU concept, which had been put on its agenda.

However the CIS summit, held on 21 October in Moscow, clearly remained unconvinced. As Yeltsin said, "We all studied it very carefully. However we all came to the conclusion that this is perhaps a good idea, but premature. Today the peoples are not ready to enter a new union..."<sup>103</sup> The summit adopted a resolution which said that the Council of Heads of State had taken note of President Nazarbayev's information on creating a Eurasian Union of States, and had decided "to use the major ideas, enunciated in the Republic of Kazakhstan's proposal, for deepening integrative processes in the Commonwealth of Independent States".<sup>104</sup> Nazarbayev expressed his displeasure at this decision at a press conference after the summit. Speaking about the other CIS leaders he said: "I started to ask my colleagues some questions: 'What's going to happen to everything we're deciding on? We've passed 451, 452, 453 resolutions since the creation of the CIS, but how will they be implemented?'... When I talk to them separately, especially if it's over a friendly lunch... they all agree that we can't live without each other. They even say we're doomed to togetherness. So why do they say something different to the press?"<sup>105</sup>

The summit decision clearly represented the dominance of Yeltsin's approach of continuing to develop integration within the CIS framework. If Yeltsin had supported Nazarbayev's initiative the outcome could have been quite different. Of course, the EAU concept would have still been actively opposed by Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkmenistan. But it might have acquired support from Kyrgyzstan and Belarus, and that would already have been enough to create the nucleus of a future union between the four CIS nations which were inclined to go

<sup>101</sup> Plishevskiy, B., *Evraziyskie manevry Nursultana Nazarbayeva nrayatsya ne vsem*, Vek, No.34, 1994, p. 7.

<sup>102</sup> Nazarbayev, N., *Na poroge XXI veka*, p. 104.

<sup>103</sup> Reuters News Service, 21.10.94.

<sup>104</sup> *Reshenie po predlozheniyu Respubliki Kazakhstan o formirovanii Evraziyskogo Soyuz Gosudarstv // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, p. 356.

<sup>105</sup> Reuters News Service, 22.10.94.

deeper in their integration than the others. But Yeltsin evidently opposed the whole EAU concept.

Yeltsin's restrained attitude was to a large degree explained by personal reasons. The personal element was always evident in Yeltsin's behavioural patterns, and Nazarbayev committed a major tactical error by not taking account of Yeltsin's extreme ambitiousness. Yeltsin could not accept anyone other than himself as the author of an initiative as important and potentially historic as the Eurasian Union. As a creator of the CIS, he had no intention of passing over the historical leadership to anyone else, even if it was in Russia's interests to do so. Thus Yeltsin did not support Nazarbayev's proposal, even though it was warmly received by some influential members of his own team. But there were of course also some considerations of principle in the Russian position.

Russia's concerns over the EAU proposal were voiced by Foreign Minister Kozyrev at the summer meeting of the Russian Foreign Policy Council devoted to CIS integration. On one hand Kozyrev made it clear that Russia wanted "a more closely-knit Commonwealth, one advancing to integration...If some republics, or several republics, are willing to join a confederation or some other union with us on a bilateral or multilateral basis, they are welcome. I can say right away that our response would be positive. If anyone is ready to accept a Eurasian Union, our answer will be yes in this case as well". On the other hand Kozyrev expressed scepticism about the seriousness of Nazarbayev's proposal. "If we try to imagine what the proposed Eurasian Union would be like, this would be somewhat strange, because we still cannot implement specific accords reached with, say, Kazakhstan, which were reaffirmed during Nursultan Nazarbayev's official visit to Moscow".<sup>106</sup> Thus Russian caution was explained by suspicions that the EAU concept was nothing more than another gesture of self-promotion by Nazarbayev, unaccompanied by any serious desire to achieve concrete results. These suspicions were largely caused by the existing difficulties in bilateral relations, particularly over ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan, but also over implementation of the bilateral agreements already concluded.

One anti-EAU argument put forward by Russian experts explained Nazarbayev's various integration initiatives by the desire to remove the problem of human rights of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan from the agenda. For example Mark Khroustalev, Director of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) Centre for International Studies, held this view.<sup>107</sup> Some Russian foreign policy analysts saw the EAU proposal as a plan to change the "rules of the game" in the CIS. Andrey Zagorsky, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of MGIMO, argued that the principal innovation in Nazarbayev's project consisted almost exclusively in changing the decision-making rules, from unanimity to a four-fifths majority, a voting procedure which he felt would prevent Russia from blocking decisions detrimental to her interests.<sup>108</sup> Said Zagorsky: "The strategy of the CIS 'junior

<sup>106</sup> Russian Interests in the CIS // International Affairs (Moscow), No.11, 1994, pp. 12-13.

<sup>107</sup> Khroustalev, M., *Tsentral'naya Aziya vo vneshney politike Rossii*, Moscow: MGIMO, 1994, p. 27.

<sup>108</sup> Rossiyskaya gazeta, 25.03.95.

partners' is well seen in the instance of Kazakhstan's proposal for Eurasian Union - this is a strategy of subordinating Russia to the collective will of the union members, which would be ensured first of all by the rules for adopting binding decisions by a four-fifths majority of votes, while the strategic aim of the majority of the CIS states consists in consolidating their own statehood, overcoming their fated dependence on Russia".<sup>109</sup>

LDPR leader Zhirinovskiy wrote in a recent book: "As for projects for an Eurasian Union, they have an anti-Russian character, because they are designed to diminish Russia's role to that of a third-rate country within a framework of the multiple components of a Eurasian association. To put it bluntly... this project contains vain plans by nationalists of Turkic origin to recreate the Golden Horde in a new form... Russians and other Slavic peoples comprised the overwhelming majority of Russia's (USSR's) population, and their incorporation into some "Eurasian people" carries an anti-Russian, anti-Slav meaning".<sup>110</sup> All these opinions in fact represented a very similar basic view. Russia, a great power, had no intention of having its policy subordinated to some supranational structure controlled by former Russian dependencies, diminishing Russia's own role in CIS and internationally.

Nazarbayev later claimed that his proposal had not been well received because it had been imperfectly understood. He wrote in his memoirs: "At that moment the project for an Eurasian Union was not fittingly received, though not categorically rejected. This attitude has prevailed for the two years since this project's publication. In general the position of many politicians reminded me then of the old bureaucratic principle, '... everything seems all right, but may it not lead to something wrong?'.<sup>111</sup> Nazarbayev explained the restrained response to his plan by the other leaders' reluctance to embark on CIS integration, an assertion obviously designed to divert attention from the project's merits and defects. Meanwhile Kazakh officials and pro-government experts tried their best to substantiate this assertion. One example is an article by A. Akhmedzhanov, head of a Department at the Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies and A. Sultangalieva, a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Oriental Studies of the Kazakhstan Academy of Sciences. They claimed that the "dubious" reaction to Nazarbayev's proposal was caused by its being perceived as an "encroachment on sovereignty... The ruling elites of the majority of post-Soviet states were alarmed by the possibility of reintegration of the post-Soviet space, which could lead to their losing power". The authors obviously did not include Nazarbayev and his regime among these "ruling elites"; on the contrary, they tried to prove his staunch adherence to "reintegration", claiming "...The EAU project conscientiously proposed rather firm forms of integration - supranational bodies not only in the economic, but also in the

<sup>109</sup> Zagorsky, A., *Rossiia - SNG i Zapad // Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, No.10, 1994, p. 83.

<sup>110</sup> Zhirinovskiy, V., *Ideologiya dlya Rossii*, Moscow [No publisher] 1997, pp. 62-63.

<sup>111</sup> Nazarbayev, N., *Na poroge XXI veka*, p. 107.



political sphere. It is possible that it also took account of public opinion, which could put pressure on political elites through the mass media".<sup>112</sup>

But the most ardent promoter of the EAU concept was Mansurov, Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Moscow. In one article he called it "the most promising among integrationist ideas proposed up to now, which meets the hopes of the majority of the population in the CIS states", and "...It is the project for forming a Eurasian Union of states which has recently acquired a reputation as the most comprehensive and popular integrationist initiative, not only among politicians and scholars, but also among the broad public of a number of CIS states".<sup>113</sup> The falsity of this statement is obvious, given the generally negative reaction of most CIS leaders and of political scientists and other experts in Russia to Nazarbayev's initiative. It is not surprising that at Mansurov's defence of his doctoral thesis one of his examiners, N.Bugay, Head of a Department of the Russian Ministry for Nationalities Affairs and Regional Policy, dismissed Mansurov's praise of the EAU concept as "disputable" and "not scientifically researched in depth". He added "It is hardly desirable to overstate the role and significance of the Eurasian Union idea advanced by Nazarbayev. In my opinion, all these postulates downgrade the role of the Russian people (Nazarbayev proclaims one thing, but does another, hammering in the notion that Kazakhs were a "repressed" people)... In my assessment, the state policy conducted by the government of Kazakhstan and President Nazarbayev himself in the sphere of inter-ethnic relations, and so much discussed in the dissertation, contributes to creation of a "new belt" of tensions on Russia's southern borders".<sup>114</sup>

Only a few Russian experts welcomed the EAU project. The most notable among them was probably Professor Bagramov, whose journal "Eurasia" was financially supported by Kazakhstan's government. He hailed Nazarbayev's initiative as "an adequate answer to the actual situation in which the peoples of the former USSR found themselves". Bagramov argued that the Eurasian Union could be of substantial benefit to Russia and stated that:

1. Creation of the Eurasian Union would mean the end or substantial weakening of centrifugal tendencies in the post-Soviet space.
2. Russia in alliance with the other CIS states would have a chance to revive itself as a mighty world power.
3. Russia would be able to overcome internal separatist trends more easily, and settle inter-ethnic conflicts in other parts of the CIS.
4. Russia would be able to provide for better protection of human rights of ethnic Russians discriminated against in the new independent states.

<sup>112</sup> Akhmedzhanov, A., Sultangalieva, A., *Ideya Evraziyskogo Soyuza dlya SNG i Kazakhstana (Popytka reintegratsii postsovetского prostranstva na printsipakh partnerstva)* // Kazakhstan i mirovoe soobshchestvo, No.1(2), 1995, p. 31.

<sup>113</sup> Mansurov, T., *Integratsiya i suverenitet - strategicheskie priority kazakhstansko-rossiyskikh otnosheniy* // Kazakhstan i mirovoe soobshchestvo, No.2(3), 1995, p. 14.

<sup>114</sup> Bugay, N., *Otzyv na rukopis doktorskoy dissertatsii Mansurova Taira Aymukhametovicha "Razvitie kazakhstansko-rossiyskikh otnosheniy v protsesse suverenizatsii Kazakhstan (1991-1995 gg.)"*, Moscow [No publisher] 1996, pp. 6-7.

Bagramov tried to refute claims that ideas of Eurasianism were used to belittle the role of the Russian people. He argued that those making such claims "ignore the Eurasian nature and Eurasian mission of the Russian people, whose national idea cannot be implemented in the narrow ethnic space, and includes the array of peoples historically formed around the Russian nation".<sup>115</sup>

Thus Bagramov's position reflected a common tendency among contemporary scholars in Russia to equate Nazarbayev's EAU concept with an ideology of neo-Eurasianism. This tendency is characteristic for such authors as Senior Fellow at the Institute of History of the Russian Academy of Science Narochnitskaya, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences Myasnikov, or political scientist Iordanskiy. The latter wrote, for example, that Nazarbayev's proposals "fill the Eurasianist idea with specific political and economic substance".<sup>116</sup> Bagramov, on the other hand, made the qualification that "modern Eurasianism and the Eurasianism of the 1920's are different phenomena" and that "this concept applied to present day conditions still waits to be worked out". But by dwelling on the EAU concept in the context of Eurasianism, Bagramov placed Nazarbayev's idea in the general stream of neo-Eurasianist thinking, creating a misleading impression and leading to inappropriate conclusions.

In reality Nazarbayev's proposals had nothing in common with the ideology of Eurasianism, and his use of a similar term was an attempt to capitalise on an ideological concept becoming increasingly popular in Russia. The centrepiece of the Eurasianist concept was the notion of common Eurasian nationalism, as opposed to the ethnic nationalisms of the various peoples inhabiting the Eurasian mainland.<sup>117</sup>

It was exactly the issue that Nazarbayev's proposal conspicuously avoided. His plan did not envisage a common state, nor even common union citizenship. Nor could Nazarbayev's policies in regard to nationality relations in Kazakhstan be interpreted as directed at creating a multi-ethnic nation. The Kazakh leaders themselves did not deny that primarily economic considerations lay behind

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<sup>115</sup> Bagramov, E., *Rossiia i proekt Evraziyskogo Soyuz* // *Evraziya: narody, kul'tury, religii*, No.1(3), 1995, pp. 21-22.

<sup>116</sup> Iordanskiy, V., *Evraziyskaya perspektiva: realnost ili mirazh?* // *Rossiia i musul'manskiy mir*, *Bulleten referativno-analiticheskoy informatsii*, No.11, 1995, p. 14; Miasnikov, V., *Evraziyskaya ideya i ee perspektivy* // *Rossiia i musul'manskiy mir*, *Bulleten referativno-analiticheskoy informatsii*, No.3, 1996, p. 8.

<sup>117</sup> One of the founders of the Eurasianist philosophy Trubetskoy wrote: "The destinies of the Eurasian peoples have interlinked with each other, have firmly bound together into a single gigantic knot, which can no longer be disentangled. Hence disengagement of one people from this entity could be achieved only through unnatural compulsion and would lead to suffering". He argued that "individual parts of the former Russian empire need a single substratum of statehood to be able to continue to exist as parts of one state", and neither the Russian nor any other individual people in Eurasia could play the role of "substratum". According to Trubetskoy, "only all the conglomerate of peoples living in this state, perceived as a special multi-ethnic nation, and in this capacity possessing its own nationalism" could be the "national substratum" of the future Eurasian state, and "common Eurasian nationalism must be a sort of expansion of the nationalism of each of the Eurasian nationalities, a sort of integration of all these individual nationalisms into one whole... We call it the Eurasian nation, its territory Eurasia, its nationalism Eurasianism... Only the awakening of the multi-ethnic Eurasian nation can give Russia-Eurasia the ethnic substratum of statehood, without which it will sooner or later start to fall apart, causing grief and suffering of all its parts", he concluded. [Trubetskoy, N., *Obscheevropeyskiy natsionalizm* // *Etnopoliticheskiy Vestnik*, No.4, 1995, pp. 218-221].

the EAU initiative. Thus Prime Minister Kazhegeldin, at a conference on foreign policy issues held in Almaty on 15 February 1995, stressed that "bringing forward the EAU project was dictated first of all by economic motives".<sup>118</sup>

It seems that the EAU initiative was prompted by a combination of factors rather than a single factor. Of course, domestic policy considerations were paramount, with a desire to play up to the aspirations of Kazakhstan's Slavic population, and thereby make them more tolerant towards the policy of Kazakh nation-state building. The other intention was to divert the attention of Russia's government and public from the situation of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan.

On the other hand there is little doubt that Nazarbayev sincerely wanted economic integration, along lines he had already proposed more than once, but on his own terms, with no concessions of principle on the issues of Kazakh sovereignty or the role of Russians in the republic, a perspective unacceptable to Russia. The EAU concept's major shortcoming was Nazarbayev's basic formula "integration and sovereignty". This in fact meant only token integration, because real integration usually involves acceptance of limitations on national sovereignties for the common good. In his project Nazarbayev did mention the necessity to "delegate" sovereignty, but analysis of his proposal shows that he did not mean it. His suggested decision-making process was little different from that already existing in the CIS, except that it substituted a four-fifths majority for unanimity. It is doubtful that such a procedure could make acute problems within the union easier to resolve, especially over enforcement of decisions, given the CIS experience of an exceptionally broad spectrum of different opinions on almost any issue. It was especially unacceptable to Russia, since it would endanger Russia's central role in the CIS, subordinating it to the collective will of the other members. Russia would want to be the leader, not just another member, of the proposed EAU.

Despite its rejection by Russia, the EAU project played a role in stimulating further discussion on re-integration of the post-Soviet space, and built up internal and external pressures on Yeltsin's administration in favour of increased integration. Besides, Nazarbayev's proposal created an effect perceived in the Kremlin as a danger of Russia's losing ideological leadership in the CIS. This forced the Russian government to seek ways of countering the EAU project. Consequently Russia prepared a special memorandum proposing tighter CIS integration in areas such as politics, defence and border protection, and Yeltsin presented it to the next CIS summit, held in Moscow on 21 October.<sup>119</sup> The Memorandum, entitled "Major Directions of Integrative Development of the Commonwealth of Independent States", was unanimously approved at the summit, together with a related "Perspective Plan for Integrative Development of the Commonwealth of Independent States". The summit voted to "acknowledge"

<sup>118</sup> Kahegeldin, A., "Evraziyskiy Soyuz": teoreticheskie diskussii i prakticheskie shagi // Vneshnyaya politika Kazakhstana, Sbornik statey, Almaty: MID Respubliki Kazakhstan, 1995, p. 25.

<sup>119</sup> Reuters News Service, 21.10.94.

Nazarbayev's proposal on EAU "and use major ideas, conveyed in the Republic of Kazakhstan's proposal for strengthening integration processes in the Commonwealth of Independent States".<sup>120</sup>

The CIS leaders, except for Niyazov of Turkmenistan, also concluded an agreement to establishment an Interstate Economic Committee of the Economic Union (IECEU), a measure long advocated by Nazarbayev. It would be based in Moscow; its voting system gave Russia 50% of the votes, and required an 80% vote for decisions. This effectively gave Russia a right of veto.<sup>121</sup> The full text of the agreement was, however, never released to the press. A brief communique from the CIS Secretariat indicated that the IECEU was given powers "to adopt binding decisions on a specific range of issues", including management of facilities which were transnational in nature, such as "energy systems, transportation, gas and oil pipelines, and jointly-owned installations".<sup>122</sup>

Another achievement of the summit was an agreement on a Payments Union, signed by all CIS states, and aimed at securing continual payments between CIS states in their national currencies. The agreement was based on acceptance of the members' national currencies as means of payment for trade and non-trade operations, and banned administrative limitations on the choice of currencies to be used by enterprises when concluding contracts. The exchange rates between national currencies were to be established by "supply and demand on the currency markets of the member-states". They undertook to apply coordinated measures to maintain the stability of their national currencies. The agreement assigned an important role to the Interstate Bank as a "specialised body of the Payments Union", whose major task was to arrange "multilateral clearing" payments between the central banks of the CIS states. To facilitate multilateral cooperation in currency payments and credit relations, it was also agreed to establish an International Currency Committee.<sup>123</sup>

In an interview after the summit Nazarbayev claimed that his idea of a Eurasian Union "pushed all the politicians and presidents to take fair decisions to set up the CIS Interstate Economic Committee, work out a customs and payments union, and for more vigorous activity by the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly".<sup>124</sup> He exaggerated the extent of his success. As usual, decisions taken by the CIS were largely symbolic. The agreement on the Payments Union provided only for very gradual introduction of the new payments regime, through conclusion of

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<sup>120</sup> Reshenie po predlozheniyu Respubliki Kazakhstan o formirovanii Evraziyskogo Soyuza Gosudarstv // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, p. 356.

<sup>121</sup> Reuters News Service, 21.10.94.

<sup>122</sup> Segodnya, 22.10.94.

<sup>123</sup> Soglasenie o sozdanii Platezhnogo soyuza gosudarstv-uchastnikov Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 357-362.

<sup>124</sup> Nazarbayev on Greater Integration Among CIS States, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 05.01.95.

special bilateral and multilateral agreements, a process which could take years.<sup>125</sup> The IECEU had little chance of becoming a really effective structure, because each national government and president would decide how much power to delegate to it. Besides the IECEU could not start work for at least several months, due to disagreements over its chairmanship; some republics objected to recommendation of a representative of Russian Deputy Prime Minister Bolshakov for the post.<sup>126</sup>

Only with the completion of negotiations on the Customs Union did a real opportunity for mutually beneficial and solid economic integration between Russia, Kazakhstan and other CIS states finally arrive. According to the treaty "On Creation of an Economic Union", signed in 1993, the Customs Union was to be the first step in movement to a fully-fledged economic union. On 20 January 1995 Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus took this first step, by signing an agreement "On Customs Union". But what actually happened was that Russia and Belarus signed a bilateral agreement on Customs Union on 6 January 1995, and Kazakhstan joined it on 20 January. The three countries agreed that two Russian-Kazakh bilateral accords, "On Single Procedure of Regulation of the Foreign Economic Activity" and "Protocol on Introduction of Free Trade Regime without Exemptions and Limitations", would serve as "inalienable parts" of the agreement, and resolved to create a special executive body for the Customs Union. Article 7 contained an important provision, with consequences for the Customs Union's future. It said that the agreement would not affect the three countries' obligations under other international treaties which "do not contradict the present agreement". The duration of the agreement was not specified, though it contained a provision for unilateral withdrawal on one year's prior notice.<sup>127</sup>

The memorandum signed by Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus on 28 January stipulated that the Customs Union would be created in two stages. First, participants would abolish customs duties and quantitative restrictions on trade between themselves, and establish common customs schedules with regard to third countries. In the second stage the territories of the members would become a single customs space, and customs controls would be imposed only along their external borders. Prime Ministers Chernomyrdin, Chigir and Kazhegeldin also signed a memorandum under which foreign trade, customs, monetary and price laws were to be standardised, with a special executive body of the Customs Union to be formed to control the process. The signatories also undertook to meet the conditions necessary for creation of the common customs space, including unification of foreign trade, customs, currency, taxation and other economic legislation; drafting of common rules for organising currency markets, access to them by authorised banks and achievement of mutual convertibility of national

<sup>125</sup> Soglasenie o sozdanii Platezhnogo soyuza gosudarstv-uchastnikov Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 357-362.

<sup>126</sup> Reuters News Service, 10.02.95.

<sup>127</sup> Soglasenie o Tamozhennom soyuze // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 230-231.

currencies; conduct of coordinated foreign economic policy; and ensuring effective joint protection of external borders. Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus declared that other CIS members could join as soon as they met the above conditions.<sup>128</sup> Kazakh Prime Minister Kazhegeldin gave a high assessment to the agreement: "The Customs Union is a most important component part of the Treaty on Creation of the Economic Union signed earlier, an important step along the way of creating a common market of goods, services, capital and labour. This agreement must influence the further process of development toward real integration".<sup>129</sup>

On 16 May 1995 in Moscow Chernomyrdin and Kazhegeldin signed an agreement on joint administration of their customs services, providing for each country to send a customs mission to the other's customs services. The missions' functions would be to coordinate decisions, organise information exchange and interaction, including joint customs control, and to draft proposals for unifying the customs legislation.<sup>130</sup>

It took six months to standardise the regulations so that the Customs Union could begin functioning; it came formally into effect on 20 July 1995, thereby completing the first stage of implementing the agreement. At a news conference on 19 July to mark this event, Kazakh First Deputy Prime Minister Isingarín said the signing of the agreement had had a definite positive effect on Kazakhstan, because since January its exports of goods to Russia had increased by almost 50%.<sup>131</sup> On 18 August 1995 Nazarbayev met visiting Russian Deputy Prime Minister Bolshakov, and they discussed further steps in implementing the agreement. Bolshakov also passed to Nazarbayev a personal message from Yeltsin, welcoming completion of the first stage of the Customs Union. "In this way", said Yeltsin, "comprehensive integration in the framework of an Economic Union Treaty becomes a reality".<sup>132</sup> The next day Bolshakov and Kazhegeldin signed a document initiating implementation of the second stage of the Customs Union.<sup>133</sup>

On 20 September 1995 Nazarbayev issued a decree "On cancelling customs control on the border of the Republic of Kazakhstan with the Russian Federation". This lifted customs controls on Russian goods; in future only shipments in transit from third countries were to be checked. The decree also provided for joint Russian/Kazakhstan customs controls on the external borders of the Customs

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<sup>128</sup> Memorandum Pravitel'stv Respubliki Belarus, Respubliki Kazakhstan i Rossiyskoy Federatsii ob uchastii v troystvennom Tamozhennom soyuze drugih zainteresovannykh gosudarstv Ekonomicheskogo soyuza // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, p. 241.

<sup>129</sup> Kazhegeldin, A., "Evraziyskiy Soyuz": teoreticheskie diskussii i prakticheskie shagi // Vneshnyaya politika Kazakhstana, Sbornik statey, Almaty: MID Respubliki Kazakhstan, 1995, p. 23.

<sup>130</sup> Soglashenie mezhdru Respublikoy Kazakhstan i Rossiyskoy Federatsiey o edinstve upravleniya tamozhennymi sluzhbami // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 247-248.

<sup>131</sup> Kazakh-Russian-Belarus Customs Union Comes into Effect on 20th July, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 21.07.95.

<sup>132</sup> Kazakh President Discusses Customs Union with Russian Envoy, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 21.08.95.

<sup>133</sup> Kazakhstan and Russia Sign Customs Union Agreement, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 21.08.95.

Union.<sup>134</sup> This, however, was not followed by any reciprocal Russian action. Moscow was obviously still unsure whether Kazakhstan would be able or willing to abide by obligations undertaken within the Customs Union. There were some grounds for such concern. One of them may have been Nazarbayev's position at the Shymkent summit of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan held on 14 April. The summit agreed a communique which made a controversial impression, in view of the obligations previously accepted by Kazakhstan under the Customs Union. Some time later Kazakh First Deputy Prime Minister Isingarín tried to deny any contradiction between the two documents.<sup>135</sup> But this economised on the truth. Kazakhstan on the one hand agreed on joint customs and foreign trade policies with Russia, and on the other undertook less than three months later to integrate economically with, and consequently to open its market to, countries outside the Customs Union. The Shymkent communique did contain a reference to Kyrgyzstan's and Uzbekistan's desire to join the Customs Union. But for the time being they were outside it, so Kazakhstan had accepted international obligations which contravened Article 7 of the Customs Union agreement.<sup>136</sup> This suggested a somewhat nonchalant attitude to the Customs Union.

On 26 September an unidentified but high-ranking customs official in Moscow was quoted as saying that Russia "does not think it possible to cancel customs control on its border with Kazakhstan as long as the latter does not bring its system of regulating foreign economic relations in line with that of Russia and Belarus".<sup>137</sup>

Yeltsin issued a decree removing customs controls on the Russia-Kazakhstan border only on 3 January 1996. Theoretically this marked completion of the first stage of the Customs Union.<sup>138</sup> But the reason for this move was not so much Moscow's satisfaction with Kazakhstan's observance of the Customs Union rules, but the new political situation that emerged in Russia after the Communists' strong performance in the December 1995 elections to the State Duma created a high probability that their candidate would win the forthcoming presidential election.<sup>139</sup> Yeltsin's team was close to panic.

One of the strong aspects of the Communists' pre-electoral tactics was active exploitation of the theme of integration of the post-Soviet space. They accused Yeltsin of breaking up the Soviet Union and failing to achieve real unification within the CIS. But this was not only a tactical ploy. The Communist Party program, adopted at the party congress on 22 January 1995, proclaimed as

<sup>134</sup> Kazakhstan Lifts Customs Control on Russian Borders, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 22.09.95.

<sup>135</sup> Kazakh-Russian-Belarus Customs Union Comes into Effect on 20th July, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 21.07.95.

<sup>136</sup> Central Asian Summit - Text of Communique, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 17.04.95.

<sup>137</sup> Russia Not Yet Ready to Cancel Customs Control on Kazakh Border, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 28.09.95.

<sup>138</sup> First Deputy Premier Soskovets Stresses Need to Develop Cooperation with CIS, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 04.01.96; Yeltsin Orders End to Customs Controls on Russian-Kazakh Border, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 04.01.96.

<sup>139</sup> Presidential elections were to take place on 16 June 1996.

one of its immediate goals "denunciation of the Belovezhskaya agreements and stage-by-stage restoration of a single Union state on a voluntary basis".<sup>140</sup> On 15 March 1996 the Duma passed a Communist-sponsored resolution revoking the RSFSR Supreme Soviet's decision of 12 December 1991 to abrogate the 1922 treaty forming the USSR. The Duma then passed a second resolution affirming the "legal force" of the 17 March 1991 referendum on preservation of the USSR, in which 71% of those voting in Russia supported retaining the union. Taken together the Duma resolutions asserted that the USSR legally continued to exist, and rejected the December 1991 accords that formed the CIS.<sup>141</sup> This fulfilled the first part of the above provision of the Communist Party program. The second part - restoration of a single Union state - was to be fulfilled if the Communist candidate won the presidential election.

Nazarbayev was seriously disturbed by the Duma decision. On 16 March he had a telephone conversation with Yeltsin, who confirmed that the Duma's resolutions had no legal force. The next day, obviously in agreement with Yeltsin, Nazarbayev issued a statement that Kazakhstan would never relinquish its sovereignty and independence. He also warned that "any actions by political movements, parties and individual persons going against the constitution and pursuing the task of destabilising the situation in our country will be regarded as illegal and resolutely terminated". On the other hand Nazarbayev could not simply ignore the political pressure created by the Duma's resolutions in favour of restoring the USSR. He, Yeltsin and other leaders had to demonstrate some progress towards CIS integration, and there was none such except for a barely functional Customs Union. During their telephone conversation Yeltsin and Nazarbayev presumably discussed how to counter the Duma's challenge, and came up with the idea of a "union of four". Nazarbayev advised that by the end of March he and Yeltsin would sign "a comprehensive document, which would bring integration to a new level".<sup>142</sup>

That document - a treaty "On Deepening Integration in Economic and Humanitarian Spheres" between Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan<sup>143</sup> - was signed in Moscow on 29 March 1996. It covered a number of issues in areas such as economic, social and cultural cooperation, financial and legal framework and management of integration. The parties pledged to coordinate directions and timing of economic reforms, and establish conditions for a common market, to coordinate financial and monetary policy with a view to achieving convertibility of their national currencies and at later stages common regulatory standards and practice of banking activity, with introduction of a common currency as the final objective, if the necessary level of integration were achieved. To achieve these goals the parties instructed their Central Banks to create a banking union. Other

<sup>140</sup> Programma Kommunisticheskoy Partii Rossiyskoy Federatsii // Pravda, 31 January 1995, p. 2.

<sup>141</sup> OMRI Daily Digest, No.55, Part I, 18.03.96.

<sup>142</sup> Zayavlenie Prezidenta Respubliki Kazakhstan N.A.Nazarbayeva po povodu resheniya Gosudarstvennoy Dumy Rossiyskoy Federatsii ot 15 marta 1996 goda (17 marta 1996 goda, g. Almaty) // Diplomaticheskii kurier, No.2, 1996, pp. 31-32.

<sup>143</sup> The accession of Kyrgyzstan to the treaty became possible after in March 1996 it joined the Customs Union.



undertakings included "preservation and strengthening of the common cultural space", "coordination of actions in planning and realisation of foreign policy", and "establishing and strengthening a common system of border protection".<sup>144</sup>

They also agreed to create three bodies to manage the integration processes. The highest, the Interstate Council, would consist of the Heads of State and of government, the Foreign Ministers, and the Chairman of the Integration Committee (with the right to put forward initiatives, but not to vote). The Integration Committee was established as a permanent executive body, comprising deputy heads of government and ministers responsible for cooperation with other CIS states.<sup>145</sup> The Inter-Parliamentary Committee would be composed of equal numbers of members of parliament from each country. Its major objective was to draft model legislation to serve as a basis for national legislation. The text of the treaty was declaratory. It contained generalities, expressing intentions, not binding obligations. The bodies of integration and the decision making process were reminiscent of those within the CIS, and it was difficult to say what new they could contribute to the integration process. The Interstate Council could take binding decisions only by unanimous vote of all the presidents at the Interstate Council. Nevertheless, official Kremlin propaganda hailed the treaty as establishing a much tighter-knit "community of four", and Nazarbayev described it as 98% comprised of his proposals.<sup>146</sup> But both Russian and foreign experts dismissed it as an artificial arrangement designed to boost Yeltsin's image with some of the Russian electorate. Presidential candidates Yavlinsky, Fyodorov and Lebed' denounced the treaty as a hasty election ploy. "The political games over the integration of CIS countries are becoming increasingly dangerous,"- they said in an unusual joint statement.<sup>147</sup> Later events showed that neither the treaty, nor the bodies created by it, produced anything useful for fostering CIS integration.

Nazarbayev's willingness to play up to Yeltsin by joining the "community of four" pointed to two things: firstly, that Nazarbayev had a vested interest in keeping Yeltsin in the Kremlin, thereby perpetuating his own future as Kazakhstan's leader; and secondly, that Nazarbayev, representing the Kazakh national elite, had become seriously alarmed at the prospect of real integration. After the signing ceremony he made an important statement, which indicated reversal of his position on CIS integration. He said the time might now be right to steady the pace of integration: "Now I say: 'Don't rush with integration. Don't whip the horses'". He also rejected the Duma's denunciation of the Belovezhskaya agreements, and hit out at Cossack activists for trying to destabilise ethnically diverse Kazakhstan. "What the Duma decides about foreign countries does not

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<sup>144</sup> Dogovor mezhdru Respublikoy Kazakhstan, Respublikoy Belarus, Kyrgyzskoy Respublikoy i Rossiyskoy Federatsiey ob uglublenii integratsii v ekonomicheskoy i gumanitarnoy oblastiakh // // Diplomaticheskii kurier, No.2, 1996, pp. 46-49.

<sup>145</sup> On 18 October 1996 the Integration Committee was also designated as the executive body of the Customs Union. [Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 08.01.97].

<sup>146</sup> Reuters News Service, 01.04.96.

<sup>147</sup> The Times, 30.03.96.

concern us in any way... There can be no talk about recreating the Soviet Union. Kazakhstan will never support it -- it makes no sense".<sup>148</sup>

At the third session of the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan, held in Almaty on 29 April 1996, Nazarbayev was even more precise. On integration he said: "Kazakhstan is prepared to accept a level of integration which does not infringe its independence. Our republic will never agree, first of all on the basis of its constitution, to formation of any former unified state. We can only envisage close, friendly integrative ties of states in all spheres of people's life. But these are relations of independent states, and not some unknown and utopian federation. All irresponsible calls... in favour of restoration of the USSR or joining Kazakhstan to another state are calls for liquidation of Kazakh statehood, which cause righteous indignation and lead to serious confrontation".<sup>149</sup> Nazarbayev's position clearly demonstrated no difference from the principles of relations already established in the CIS, and no desire for a more advanced integration model. Moreover, he once again demonstrated his allegiance to "Kazakh statehood", contrary to many official pronouncements that Kazakhstan was a "multinational state". In his speech to the CIS summit in Moscow on 28 March 1997 Nazarbayev reiterated his position against more advanced forms of integration, stating that for the new independent states "national-state interest is higher than everything else, including chimerical associations and confederations".<sup>150</sup>

Nazarbayev's anti-integration stance fully revealed itself in his reaction to the conclusion on 2 April 1997 of the Union Treaty between Russia and Belarus. Nazarbayev's spokesman Kusherbayev said Kazakhstan was happy to see a union between Russia and Belarus, but warned that it was concerned by some aspects of the treaty and by the speed of its adoption. To justify his stance Kusherbayev put forward a rather tenuous argument that "instead of working for the cause of unification, the union treaty may cause disagreements within Russia", and "a number of Russia's regions, Chechnya, for example, may demand a similar treaty for themselves".<sup>151</sup> In reality the Kazakh authorities were concerned primarily with the effect that conclusion of the treaty could have on the internal situation in Kazakhstan. They obviously expected it to increase internal pressures, especially among the non-Kazakh population, in favour of following the Belarus example.

Nazarbayev's interest in integration with Russia and other CIS states was motivated by the desire to extract immediate political and economic benefits for himself or Kazakhstan, while at the same time avoiding or ignoring obligations of substance. When the Kazakh leadership saw integration becoming a real political issue, their enthusiasm for it vanished. What contributed to this turnaround was the Russian leadership's early 1996 change of mood towards favouring real integration, prompted by the very strong Communist showing in the Duma

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<sup>148</sup> Reuters News Service, 01.04.96.

<sup>149</sup> Nazarbayev, N., *Obschestvennoe soglasie - osnova demokraticheskogo razvitiya Kazakhstana*, Doklad na tret'ey sessii Assamblei narodov Kazakhstana // *Kazakhstan i mirovye soobshchestvo*, No.1, 1996, p. 7.

<sup>150</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 24.04.97.

<sup>151</sup> Reuters News Service, 02.04.97.

elections. At earlier stages Nazarbayev could readily advance integrative initiatives without worrying that they might be accepted. He could always be sure that someone else would block them, and this gave him opportunities to portray himself as a staunch proponent of integration without running any risk of becoming involved in any agreements that would undermine Kazakhstan's sovereignty. When, however, Yeltsin turned to real integration and achieved a positive result with Belarus, Nazarbayev understood that he could no longer proclaim initiatives and then blame Moscow for their failure.

Kazakhstan's more reserved approach to integration was immediately translated into practical policies. In March 1996 the government issued a number of decrees relaxing trade controls and introducing new tariff rates. They took effect in two stages, from 14 April and 1 June. Export tariffs on many key commodities were halved, while duties on imported consumer goods such as clothing, furniture and vehicles were slashed. Joint tariffs within the Customs Union were higher than Kazakhstan wanted, and regulation was too tight, so Almaty decided to take advantage of Yeltsin's preoccupation with the elections, and went back on obligations previously accepted within the Customs Union. Kazakhstan's Deputy Economics Minister Begakhmetov revealed that Kazakhstan had asked Russia in the previous year to agree to lower import tariffs for these items, and opted to go it alone when Russia declined. "We gained a lot from the Customs Union... But Kazakhstan is a sovereign state and has its own interests to defend. We don't produce cars. We were basically defending Russian industry".<sup>152</sup> The Kazakh authorities artfully exploited Yeltsin's dependence on them in the election campaign. He could not afford even moderate criticism of Kazakhstan's decisions, because the image of the Customs Union was one of CIS integration's few success stories.

When the election fever was over and the political situation in Russia stabilised, following Yeltsin's successful heart operation, Moscow revisited the issue of Kazakhstan's compliance with Customs Union obligations. On 14 January Yeltsin's press service announced that he had informed the Duma that he had not signed the law on Customs Union between Russia and Kazakhstan, because in his opinion it contained several inconsistencies.<sup>153</sup> The law, ratifying the Customs Union and common foreign trade regulations of Russia and Kazakhstan, had been passed by the Duma on 15 December 1996, and by the Federation Council on 25 December. The press service's release said that Yeltsin's action amounted to temporary freezing of the Customs Union with Kazakhstan, and coincided with the Russian Federal Border Guard Service's decision to deploy Russian Cossack units along the Russian-Kazakh frontier, effectively reintroducing border controls. This caused a painful reaction in Kazakhstan, and not only because Cossacks were involved.

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<sup>152</sup> Reuters News Service, 25.03.96; Financial Times, 17.04.96.

<sup>153</sup> Yeltsin Vetoes Several Laws, Including One on Customs Union with Kazakhstan, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 16.01.97.

On 18 March Kasymov, Chairman of Kazakhstan's State Customs Committee told a news conference that Kazakhstan "cannot allow our borders to be as open as they have been until now", and "The economic security of our state is suffering, huge amounts of contraband goods are being brought in". He said the other members of the Customs Union -- Russia, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan -- had not complied with the union's constrictions, which in turn entitled Kazakhstan to turn its back on it. "Our neighbours in all geographical directions are strengthening their own borders, their customs posts are now armed with armoured vehicles", - he said, and added that Kazakhstan would begin by tightening its customs regime at its 19 airports, then establish customs posts along its lengthy borders.<sup>154</sup> This was obviously retaliation for the Russian action. At a press conference in Moscow on 25 March, at the end of the CIS summit, Nazarbayev described the Customs Union as a temporary arrangement, and stated that it would no longer be needed once its members joined the World Trade Organisation.<sup>155</sup>

Exchanges of blows did not stop at that. In a statement on 20 May 1997 Tuleyev, Russia's Minister for Cooperation with the CIS States, criticised Kazakhstan's unilateral introduction of customs inspections at airports, railway stations and roads as "in defiance of agreements reached among the four members of the Customs Union". He characterised Nazarbayev as "an energetic initiator of and participant in many blocs, projects and actions clearly of anti-Russian orientation", whose political and economic decisions are "aimed at CIS' further disintegration".<sup>156</sup> Thus the Customs Union, launched with widespread enthusiasm, proved a failure. In the first half of 1997 trade between its members fell by 33%.<sup>157</sup>

In September 1997 Kazakhstan and Russia made an attempt to revive the Customs Union. The issue was discussed during Nazarbayev's visit to Moscow's 850th anniversary celebrations. Both he and Yeltsin advocated more efficient integration between the members of the Customs Union and strengthening interaction within CIS. They discussed preparations for a session of the Interstate Council of the "four" and for the next CIS summit.<sup>158</sup> Nazarbayev spoke in favour of removing border controls, creating a common economic space, coordinating foreign trade and joint security, and said "Integration of the "four" should move in the direction of a Eurasian Union being created on the same lines as the European Union".<sup>159</sup> Following the meeting Russian presidential spokesman Yastrzhembsky told journalists Moscow was dissatisfied with the working of the Customs Union, and expected to hold a session of the Interstate Council of the "four" prior to the CIS summit in Kishinev, to give a boost to CIS integration.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Reuters News Service, 18.03.97.

<sup>155</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 01.04.97.

<sup>156</sup> Russian Minister Responds to President Nazarbayev's Remarks, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 22.05.97.

<sup>157</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 30.10.97.

<sup>158</sup> Yeltsin, Nazarbayev for Making Integration More Efficient, ITAR-TASS World Service, 06.09.97.

<sup>159</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 09.09.97.

<sup>160</sup> Kremlin Unpleased with CIS Customs Union's Work, ITAR-TASS World Service, 10.09.97.

The session took place in Moscow on 22 October. Nazarbayev's speech at the session is of interest, because it contained a set of Kazakhstan's complaints against Russia over the Customs Union, and a program for its future development. Nazarbayev made the following charges: introduction of "rates of customs tariffs", which "violated the procedure for changing customs duties"; application of excise duties to Kazakhstan's goods; tightening the regime for transit of alcohol, including temporary depositing of customs duties as security; tightening of customs controls at the Russian-Kazakh border; introduction of customs controls on citizens of Kazakhstan, which "creates unwarranted social tensions and additional inconveniences". Nazarbayev also complained about high Russian railway tariffs, which increased the costs of Kazakhstan's exports, making them less competitive. He proposed an explicit set of measures to facilitate trade between the member-states, including introduction of norms common in international practice for levying indirect taxes on import and export of goods, and abolishing such taxes altogether on transit of goods between members of the Customs Union; bringing closer trade regimes with third countries; establishing common approaches to tariff and non-tariff regulations, and common rules for foreign currency control and regulation; establishing free transit of goods through the territory of the Customs Union; strict control over observance of treaties, agreements and decisions; and decisions of the Interstate Council to be by qualified majority, not unanimity.<sup>161</sup>

Although Nazarbayev's initiatives pragmatically suited Kazakhstan's immediate economic interests, most of them were supported by the Interstate Council. A plan of action was accepted, to bring closer regulations on trade regimes with third countries, unify approaches to tariff and non-tariff regulation, and introduce common currency controls and freedom of transit, provided that the unified rules for commodity shipment under customs surveillance were observed. Decisions on a free trade zone for Customs Union member-states, and on coordinated principles for calculating and collecting indirect taxes, were also signed. The latter implied switching to a new tax system from 1 January 1998, which envisaged mutually compatible systems for calculating and collecting taxes. Value-added tax (VAT) was to be collected in the country of destination within the Union, and manufacturers to be exempt from VAT on goods exported to other Union members. The Prime Ministers issued a ruling on a draft treaty on common measures of non-tariff regulation. The agreement was to enable member-states to start agreeing unified lists of goods to which measures of non-tariff settlement would be applied.

The Interstate Council approved priority guidelines for implementing the "treaty of four", which included forming a common market of goods, services, labour and capital, further development of the Union and progress in the drafting of laws encouraging integration. The council reacted positively to Tajik President Rahmonov's appeal for Tajikistan's admission to the Customs Union, and instructed the Integration Committee to examine the matter carefully and submit its findings

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<sup>161</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 30.10.97.

to the Council's next session. One procedural decision established a Council of Heads of Government attached to the Interstate Council. Nazarbayev was elected Chairman of the Interstate Council, but selection of a Chairman of the Integration Committee was postponed until the Council's next session.<sup>162</sup>

Though the session managed to stabilise the situation in the Customs Union and curbed the negative trends that had developed in the field of integration in summer 1997, it added very little of practical value to the Customs Union. It seemed that the "four" just returned to the very basics from which any Customs Union should have started, and from what could have been achieved in 1995, had the members had sufficient desire and will. But both remained in short supply, because disagreements resurfaced immediately after the session of the Interstate Council. On 24 October A.Kruglov, Head of the Russian Customs Committee, told a news conference that the Russian customs service did not favour introduction of the international practice of collecting VAT in the Customs Union. "In this case, customs control will have to be imposed on the borders between the countries of the union," he said. Therefore, other methods for unifying taxation principles must be found. Unifying excises, or indirect taxes, in the four countries would not lead to altering their rate in Russia. "Unification of excises in the union will most likely be based on the current rates in Russia".<sup>163</sup> The Interstate Council session scheduled for 18 December 1997 was postponed, allegedly due to changes in Yeltsin's work schedule,<sup>164</sup> but the real reason may have been lack of progress in implementing decisions on the Customs Union.

It seems that Russian and Kazakh diplomatic moves in autumn 1997 were directed less at achieving a breakthrough in the integration process than at repairing the damage done to bilateral relations in previous months, and stopping centrifugal tendencies pushing the two countries further and further away from each other. Events developed on the cyclical pattern which had already become traditional in Russian-Kazakh relations: expectations and projects for deeper integration - failure to implement concluded accords - deterioration of relations - revival of hopes for further integration. A prospect of further disintegration suited neither Yeltsin nor Nazarbayev, for domestic political reasons. On the other hand, there were no visible signs that Nazarbayev was prepared to jettison his policies of nation-state building and turn towards real integration with Russia. So the Interstate Council's decisions were no more than applications of previous practices of observing civilities and preserving a semblance of integration. In reality the Customs Union remains barely functional. If not completely dead, it drags on as a secondary commitment, whose provisions nobody intends to fulfil. It is difficult to imagine when and under what circumstances relations within the Customs Union

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<sup>162</sup> Russian, Belarusian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz Leaders Agree on Further Integration Steps, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 24.10.97; Quadilateral Customs Union Likely to Accept Tajikistan, ITAR-TASS World Service, 23.10.97.

<sup>163</sup> Customs Chief Sceptical of New VAT Rules for Customs Union Members, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 27.10.97.

<sup>164</sup> Four CIS Presidents to Meet in January Ahead of CIS Summit, ITAR-TASS World Service, 17.12.97.

could be restored and turned towards real integration. Until this happens no possibility for any broad CIS integration is likely to be realised.

## CHAPTER 4

### RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND KAZAKHSTAN IN THE MILITARY AND STRATEGIC SPHERE

One of the important issues that Russian diplomacy had to tackle in relations with other CIS states, including Kazakhstan, was the future of the vast military complex spread throughout all former Soviet republics. The agreement to create the CIS provided for preserving "a common military and strategic space under joint command, including joint control over nuclear armaments, to be regulated by a special agreement".<sup>1</sup> By the decision of the Alma-Ata summit, command of the former USSR armed forces was entrusted to Air Marshal E. Shaposhnikov. But the plans to maintain unified command of the CIS Joint Armed Forces did not materialise, because some of the newly independent states (e.g. Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan) were not inclined to impose constraints of centralised control over their activity in the military field.

Of all CIS leaders, the most ardent supporter of joint armed forces was Nazarbayev. His position was, of course, far from sentimental adherence to the unity of former Soviet republics, and was based on pragmatic considerations. Nazarbayev clearly had no illusions on what sort of army independent Kazakhstan could create, nor that it would be a match for the Russian army. In an interview he admitted that "in order to organise normal defence or armed forces, and to draw up a doctrine, a state like Kazakhstan, at least, needs time".<sup>2</sup> At the same time existence of joint armed forces would allow Kazakhstan to participate in the decision-making process on their use and prevent their employment against Kazakhstan's interests. At the republic's Security Council meeting in mid-January 1992 he reaffirmed his conviction of the need to have unified armed forces on the entire territory of the CIS, even if only Russia and Kazakhstan agreed to this.<sup>3</sup> At the CIS summit in Minsk on 14 February he proposed to impose a moratorium for two or three years on creating separate armies, but the other republics, including Russia showed little enthusiasm.<sup>4</sup>

Yeltsin, on the contrary, looked at both options. Separate armed forces would well suit Russia, but it did not want to be seen as initiating the break up of the common military complex. First signs that Yeltsin was exploring the option of separate Russian armed forces appeared in mid-January 1992, when the Russian leadership was reported to be preparing a draft presidential decree on armed forces

<sup>1</sup> Soglashenie o sozdanii Sodruchestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv // Kazakhstansko-Rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> Nazarbayev: Summit and Documents "Not Particularly Comforting", BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 16.02.92

<sup>3</sup> Nazarbayev: Republic May Be Forced to Form Own Army, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 14.01.92.

<sup>4</sup> Nazarbayev: Summit and Documents "Not Particularly Comforting", BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 16.02.92



of the Russian Federation. It allegedly provided that Russia would proclaim itself the legal successor of the USSR also in military matters, and assume the rights and duties of the former USSR with regard to armed forces, including those deployed outside Russian territory.<sup>5</sup>

On 7 May 1992 Yeltsin issued a decree on formation of separate Russian Armed forces, and Nazarbayev had to follow suit. On 8 May he signed a decree "On Formation of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan".<sup>6</sup> This started the process of formal separation of the armed forces between Russia and Kazakhstan. There was, however, the problem of nuclear weapons stationed in Kazakhstan. They could not be simply divided, because this would make Kazakhstan a nuclear weapon state.

Before the collapse of the USSR Kazakhstan had on its territory 104 RC-20 (SS-18) heavy ICBMs, each with ten 550 kiloton nuclear warheads, 40 Tu 95MC (Bear) strategic bombers, with A total of 240 nuclear-armed cruise missiles,<sup>7</sup> and an unspecified number of tactical nuclear weapons. This potential could turn Kazakhstan into a potent military power. Kazakhstan's reluctance to relinquish this arsenal clearly manifested itself after it gained independence. The emergence of the problem could be traced back to the first days after the unsuccessful coup attempt in late August 1991. In those days some republics declared independence but met with threatening declarations by the RSFSR government on border issues.

The Kazakhs' reaction to these declarations was the harshest. In his telegram to Yeltsin Nazarbayev went so far as to refer to Kazakhstan's nuclear potential. "Particular danger lies in the fact that Kazakhstan is a nuclear republic", he said.<sup>8</sup> Such a phrase, translated from the language of diplomacy, could mean nothing but a threat to use nuclear weapons for protecting Kazakhstan's territorial integrity. On 16 September 1991 Nazarbayev stated in an interview that Kazakhstan did not intend to renounce the nuclear weapons stationed on its territory.<sup>9</sup> In his memoirs he directly referred to the "days following the coup, when voices were heard about territorial changes" as the main reason for his decision to keep nuclear weapons.<sup>10</sup>

In practice Nazarbayev was bluffing. Kazakhstan had neither the technical ability to use nuclear weapons nor the power to take physical control of them, because the strategic nuclear forces were manned predominantly by ethnic Russians who would take orders only from Strategic Rocket Force or Air Force headquarters in Moscow. Nor could Kazakhstan attempt to take over the missile

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<sup>5</sup> Russian Government Reportedly Ready to Take Control of CIS Forces, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 13.01.92.

<sup>6</sup> On 18 August 1993 Nazarbayev also signed a decree on creation of Kazakhstan's border guard troops to be formed on the basis of the Eastern border guard district of the former USSR.

<sup>7</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiey E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, p. 133.

<sup>8</sup> Nazarbayev Warns of the Dangers of Border Claims, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, Third Series, 31.08.91.

<sup>9</sup> Nazarbayev: Kazakhstan Not to Renounce Nuclear Weapons, BBC Monitoring Service, Part 1, The USSR, Third Series, 17.09.91.

<sup>10</sup> Nazarbayev, N., Na poroge XXI veka, p. 66.

sites or airfields by force, because it did not have its own army, and the former Soviet army would not take orders from it. Thus Nazarbayev's tough statements were nothing more than a gamble exploiting inexperience of the new Russian leadership.

But this was a gamble which soon involved Americans too. US Secretary of State J. Baker, who on 16 September was visiting Almaty, linked future Western support for Kazakhstan with a satisfactory solution of the nuclear issue. Nazarbayev, in his turn, tried to persuade Baker that nuclear weapons were vital for the defence and security of Kazakhstan.<sup>11</sup> Following that in a speech at a public ceremony Nazarbayev stated that Kazakhstan "will take all necessary measures to establish reliable control over the strategic missiles located on our territory. This control should be exercised within the context of a unified defence of the country, with the mandatory participation of representatives of Kazakhstan".<sup>12</sup> This formula meant that Nazarbayev did not exactly want Kazakhstan to be a nuclear state, but objected against Russia's sole ownership of nuclear arms and wanted to have a veto on their possible use.

To a large degree this Nazarbayev's position found reflection in documents, concluded at the Alma-Ata conference of the leaders of former Soviet republics on 21 December 1991. Agreement on Joint Measures with Respect to Nuclear Weapons, signed by the four nuclear republics, specified that nuclear arms were "a part of the Joint Strategic Armed Forces", which ensured "collective security of all members of the Commonwealth of Independent States". The Agreement stipulated that by 1 July 1992 Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus would "ensure the removal of tactical nuclear weapons to central factory depots for their disassembly under joint control". Tactical nuclear weapons were mobile and relatively easy to relocate into Russian territory even without consent and cooperation of the authorities of a particular republic. But Nazarbayev effectively avoided any obligations with regard to strategic nuclear forces (SNF). The agreement spoke of elimination of these weapons on the territory of Belarus and Ukraine, not Kazakhstan. Unlike them Kazakhstan did not pledge to accede to the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NNP) as a non-nuclear-weapon state.<sup>13</sup>

Such a perspective was unacceptable to Russia. Moscow did not want to have nuclear armed neighbours, who could challenge its leadership in post-Soviet space. However, after the destabilisation of internal political situation caused by the collapse of the USSR Russia was simply not strong enough to pressure Kazakhstan in relinquishing nuclear arms. Besides such a pressure, if applied unilaterally, could have negative international consequences. Fortunately for Russia, Kazakhstan's position was not acceptable to Washington either. NNP treaty had long been one of the highest US foreign policy priorities. The emergence

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 64-67.

<sup>12</sup> Krasnaya zvezda, 12.10.91.

<sup>13</sup> Soglashenie o sovместnykh merakh v otnoshenii yadernogo oruzhiya // Kazakhstansko-Rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 325-326.

of Kazakhstan as a new nuclear power could create a dangerous precedent for other states to opt for nuclear status. Besides there were serious doubts that independent Kazakhstan would have sufficient means, expertise and devotion to exercise control over its nuclear arms and technology, including prevention of their leakage to anti-American regimes in the Third World and to terrorist organisations.

Basically, Russian and American interests on the issue of Kazakhstan's nuclear weapons coincided, and Moscow decided to capitalise on this. It welcomed Washington's role as a leader in arranging international pressure on Kazakhstan. The signs of Russian-American cooperation on the issue appeared on 5 February 1992, when in a testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee US Under-Secretary of State Bartholemew revealed an unofficial plan, allegedly agreed with Russia, that all strategic nuclear missiles outside Russian territory would be disabled within three years and eliminated within seven years.<sup>14</sup>

Nazarbayev was concerned about these developments and said in an interview on the next day that Yeltsin did not speak for Kazakhstan on nuclear disarmament matters, and his discussions with Bush can only be regarded as an initiative.<sup>15</sup> In this situation Russian diplomacy made its own move. On 13 February *Izvestia* reported about Kozyrev's remarks that Kazakhstan "has no other choice but to accede to the NNP treaty". "Both credits and foreign aid could be jeopardised. When the Americans began having suspicions about Pakistani nuclear program, they imposed sanctions against that very close ally".<sup>16</sup> The statement had two purposes. Firstly it made clear to the West Russian own position in favour of nuclear disarmament of Kazakhstan, indicating that in this important issue Russia would act as an ally. Secondly, it showed to Kazakhstan potential consequences it could face in case of non-compliance. Being a land locked country Kazakhstan did not have a chance of withstanding economic sanctions if imposed with Russian participation.

Nazarbayev tried to break Russian-American coalition on the nuclear issue by trying to provoke contradictions between Moscow and Washington. On 28 April he sent a message to Bush stating that Kazakhstan would like to conclude a strategic alliance with the US and that Kazakhstan planned to retain the strategic nuclear weapons inherited from the USSR only temporarily.<sup>17</sup> Nazarbayev evidently believed that if the Americans showed at least the slightest interest in his proposal it would immediately arouse Russian suspicions, and he could then bargain with Moscow dropping his proposed alliance with the US in exchange for Moscow's concessions on the nuclear issue.

But Nazarbayev's calculations did not work. On the day his message arrived in Washington J.Baker announced that in the event of a threatened nuclear attack against Kazakhstan or Ukraine the US would render political support by bringing the issue to the UN Security Council. But even limited political guarantees

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<sup>14</sup> Washington Post, 06.02.92.

<sup>15</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report, No.26, 07.02.92.

<sup>16</sup> *Izvestiya*, 13.02.92.

<sup>17</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report No. 82, 29.04.92.

would depend, he emphasised, on Kazakhstan and Ukraine signing the NNP treaty and renouncing nuclear arms. Baker firmly ruled out the possibility of extending a formal security guarantee or US military commitment to either country.<sup>18</sup> Baker's statement was obviously directed at removing Russian suspicions and making it clear to everybody that diplomatic games around such a sensitive issue as non-proliferation of nuclear weapons were not permissible. The statement coincided with another important development. Nazarbayev was invited to come to Washington on 19 May to meet Bush.<sup>19</sup> The invitation was obviously designed to persuade Kazakhstan to relinquish nuclear weapons.

Washington's rebuff left Nazarbayev in a diplomatically weak position. On his way to the US capital he made a stopover in Moscow and had a long conversation with Yeltsin, after which he stated at a press conference that Kazakhstan would sign the NNP treaty as a non-nuclear state. He added that the Tashkent Collective Security Treaty<sup>20</sup> provided the security guarantees that Kazakhstan had sought.<sup>21</sup> But Nazarbayev's explanation of his change of attitude as motivated by receipt of security guarantees from Russia is unconvincing. Russia had never backtracked on its security obligations to the former USSR republics and had offered various security arrangements to other CIS states including Kazakhstan long before a formal treaty was signed in Tashkent. Kazakh leadership had been well aware of this, but Nazarbayev apparently not satisfied with Russian proposals had sought American guarantees instead. Moreover, it seemed that it was Russia that he regarded as the major security threat. Most likely, the conclusion of the Tashkent treaty simply gave him a chance for a face saving diplomatic retreat.

While in Washington Nazarbayev once again demanded American security guarantees, and claimed to have finally extracted from Bush a document promising such guarantees to Kazakhstan.<sup>22</sup> The latter assertion is unsupported by any other evidence and may therefore be doubted. After Nazarbayev's meeting with Bush Assistant Secretary of State Niles told the press that "full agreement" on all questions involving the START treaty had been reached and that Nazarbayev had promised to eliminate all nuclear weapons on Kazakhstan's territory within seven years,<sup>23</sup> but mentioned no security guarantees to Kazakhstan. Neither were they mentioned in other subsequent comments by US officials.

On 23 May in Lisbon Kazakhstan together with Ukraine and Belarus signed the special protocol to the START-1 treaty. Article 5 of the protocol stipulated that they would adhere to the NNP treaty as non-nuclear states as soon as possible, and would begin immediately to take all necessary actions to this end in accordance

<sup>18</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report No. 83, 30.04.92.

<sup>19</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report No. 82, 29.04.92.

<sup>20</sup> The treaty was signed on 15 May by Russia, Kazakhstan, other Central Asian states and Armenia. It said inter alia that "in the event of an act of aggression being committed against any of the participating states, all the other participating states shall give it the necessary assistance, including military assistance". [Treaty on Collective Security, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 25.05.92].

<sup>21</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report No. 95, 19.05.92.

<sup>22</sup> Nazarbayev, N., *Na poroge XXI veka*, p. 69.

<sup>23</sup> Reuters News Service, 19.05.92.

with their constitutional practices.<sup>24</sup> This provision was substantiated in Article 8 of the Russian-Kazakh treaty "On Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance". It referred to Kazakhstan's obligation to adhere to the NNP treaty as a non-nuclear weapon state. The sides also pledged to cooperate for the purposes of "safe exploitation" of nuclear weapons before their complete withdrawal from Kazakhstan". This meant that until the withdrawal Russian specialists would have access and supervision of the nuclear weapons in the republic. This provision served as a deterrent against any attempt by Almaty to evade its obligations in the nuclear field. If such evasions were discovered it could be interpreted as violation of the treaty and free Russia of all its obligations under it.

Kazakhstan's obligations to become a non-nuclear state did not, however, remove the nuclear issue from the agenda of Russian Kazakh relations. It was only the beginning of a prolonged diplomatic struggle leading to Kazakhstan's de facto nuclear disarmament. The next objective that Moscow had to achieve was to establish its sole control of the CIS nuclear weapons including those deployed in Kazakhstan. But Moscow's task was not easy. Though Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus pledged to become non-nuclear, they had a formal right to the ownership of nuclear weapons on their territory<sup>25</sup> and this allowed them to put forward demands for participation in control and use of such weapons.

On 19 August a Russian military delegation, headed by General V Dubinin, the Chief of General Staff, arrived in Alma-Ata and discussed a number of military issues, including the legal status of SNF units stationed in Kazakhstan.<sup>26</sup> Before the CIS summit in Bishkek Russia and Kazakhstan reportedly finalised all provisions of a draft agreement on the status of SNF units stationed in Kazakhstan. But one issue remained unresolved: who would have jurisdiction over them. Russian Defence Minister Grachev said that if Yeltsin and Nazarbayev agreed, the issue could be resolved on the Belorussian pattern, with SNF transferred to Russian jurisdiction.<sup>27</sup> On 8 October 1992 Shaposhnikov said in an interview that nuclear weapons should not be left "without control by a specific national state", and that his initiative had been fully agreed with Yeltsin.<sup>28</sup> It was the first official Russian proposal to take full control of the CIS' nuclear weapons. In Bishkek Shaposhnikov suggested that Russia should be given sole control over launch codes and dismantling of nuclear weapons. Belarus supported this proposal, but it

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<sup>24</sup> Reuters News Service, 24.05.92.

<sup>25</sup> The agreement on property rights concluded between the CIS countries at the summit in Bishkek on 9 October 1992 confirmed that the contracting parties "mutually recognize the transfer into their ownership of the property... under the former Union jurisdiction, situated at the territory of the Parties, accomplished in accordance with their national legislation". The agreement covered all property, including military, located in the respective republics as on 31 August 1991. [Tsibukov, V., *Problemy pravopriemstva v Sodruzhestve Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv*, Moscow: MGIMO, 1994, pp. 44-45.]

<sup>26</sup> Russia and Kazakhstan Conclude Military Agreements, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 22.08.92; Kazakh Official Hails Mutually Beneficial Defence Agreements with Russia, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 16.09.92.

<sup>27</sup> Concern about Nuclear Weapons in Ukraine and Kazakhstan, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 09.10.92.

<sup>28</sup> Reuters News Service, 08.10.92.

met strong resistance from Ukraine.<sup>29</sup> Nazarbayev was also uncooperative. On the eve of the summit he indicated he was against changing the SNF status.<sup>30</sup>

Russia again raised the issue of control over the SNF at the CIS Nuclear Policy Committee meeting on 21 January preceding the CIS summit in Minsk.<sup>31</sup> Before the meeting Shaposhnikov reiterated Russia's position that "according to the spirit and letter of the Lisbon Protocol, all nuclear weapons in what was the USSR are Russian".<sup>32</sup> At the meeting Russia counted very much on winning Kazakhstan's support and diplomatically isolating Ukraine. Grachev even praised Kazakhstan's position, saying it was close to that of Belarus.<sup>33</sup> But this was clearly wishful thinking. At the meeting Kazakhstan sided with Ukraine, not Russia. Kazakhstan's Defence Minister Nurmagambetov told reporters, following the meeting that SNF were not under Russian control, but "under unified command". According to L.Ivashov, Secretary to the CIS Council of Defence Ministers, there had been tough talking between the four members of the "nuclear club". The meeting failed to resolve the argument over ownership and control of the SNF.<sup>34</sup> Squabbling continued at the CIS Defence Ministers' meeting in Moscow on 13 May 1993.<sup>35</sup>

On 11 June 1993 in a diplomatically ingenious move Yeltsin appointed the CIS Commander-in-Chief, Air Marshal Shaposhnikov, to the post of Secretary of the Russian Security Council. In an interview on the next day Yeltsin said that Shaposhnikov had become available because the responsibilities of the CIS Command were shrinking as the former Soviet states built their own armies, and added that the SNF were being subordinated to the Russian Defence Ministry.<sup>36</sup> This move was very close to breaching Russia's international obligations, but did not quite do so. The ingenuity was that Shaposhnikov relinquished the Command of his own free will and nobody could prevent his doing so, while no successor could be appointed, because the post could be filled only by unanimous vote of the CIS Council of Heads of State, and Russia would not approve any potential candidate. Shaposhnikov's resignation therefore ensured de facto elimination of the post, and without a Commander-in-Chief the High Command of CIS Joint Armed Forces could not function. This effectively transferred operational control of the SNF to the Russian Defence Ministry.

The CIS Defence Ministers' meeting in Moscow on 15 June therefore had no alternative to acceptance of Russia's proposal to abolish the CIS High

<sup>29</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report, No.195, 09.10.92.

<sup>30</sup> Comments on Military Issues; Nazarbayev Evasive about Nuclear Withdrawal, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 10.10.92.

<sup>31</sup> Shaposhnikov Says It is Time to Decide on Nuclear Weapons Outside Russia, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 13.01.93.

<sup>32</sup> Shaposhnikov on Future of CIS Nuclear Forces, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 23.01.93.

<sup>33</sup> Grachev Says Finding Compromise on CIS Strategic Forces Will Be Difficult, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 23.01.93.

<sup>34</sup> Reuters News Service, 21.02.93.

<sup>35</sup> Foye, S., End of CIS Command Heralds New Russian Defence Policy? // RFE/RL Research Report, Vol.2, No.27, 02.07.93, p. 47.

<sup>36</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report, No.110, 14.06.93.

Command,<sup>37</sup> and to replace it with a Staff for Coordination of Military Cooperation of CIS Member States, a looser body with only consultative functions, and with no authority over CIS nuclear weapons. Russia's move also deprived Kazakhstan of any role in decision-making on the use of nuclear weapons. Now Moscow had to solve only the final problem, physical removal of the nuclear weapons from Kazakhstan. And Almaty had only one option left - to exact the highest possible price for their removal.

In a speech at the UN on 5 October Suleimenov, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister, indicated the possible price for Kazakhstan's nuclear disarmament - \$2-billion in aid to dismantle the nuclear systems and clean up the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site.<sup>38</sup> But Russia, with its own economic problems, had no intention of paying the bill. Russian diplomacy applied the tactic which by then had already become traditional, sustaining international fears of possible of nuclear proliferation from Kazakhstan, while referring the financial aspects of the problem to the West.

In December 1993 US Vice-President Gore visited Almaty, bringing an offer of \$88 million of financial assistance for Kazakhstan's expenses in dismantling nuclear missiles. Kazakhstan also won recognition of its right to part of the proceeds of sale of highly enriched uranium extracted from the warheads. On 13 December 1993, three hours after the American delegation landed at Almaty airport, Kazakhstan's parliament ratified the NNP treaty, and accepted a loan of \$214 million obtained from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development with American help.<sup>39</sup> In return Kazakhstan signed a framework agreement on dismantling intercontinental ballistic missile launching silos.

Final details of the American denuclearisation aid package were formalised on 15 February 1994, during Nazarbayev's visit to the USA. Nazarbayev formally handed documents on Kazakhstan's accession to the NNP treaty to President Clinton, who more than tripled American aid to Kazakhstan, from \$91 million in 1993 to \$311 million in 1994.<sup>40</sup> To further encourage Kazakhstan's nuclear disarmament, US Secretary of Defence Perry visited Almaty on 19-20 March, and signed an additional agreement providing \$15 million in aid for defence industry conversion. Perry also received assurances from Nazarbayev that all the SS-18 ICBMs in Kazakhstan would be shipped to Russia for dismantling.<sup>41</sup>

The total sum received by Kazakhstan was not of course the \$2 billion initially requested, but at least something to sweeten the disarmament pill. In any case it helped Moscow to achieve formal agreements with Almaty on the nuclear issue. A preliminary understanding had been reached in December 1993, when Chernomyrdin arrived after Gore had left. His talks with Tereshchenko resulted in signing of a memorandum which provided for negotiations to begin "in the

<sup>37</sup> Foye, S., End of CIS Command Heralds New Russian Defence Policy? // RFE/RL Research Report, Vol.2, No.27, 02.07.93, p. 48.

<sup>38</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report, No.192, 06.10.93.

<sup>39</sup> Nezavisimaya gazeta, 16.12.93.

<sup>40</sup> Segodnya, 16.02.94.

<sup>41</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report, No.55, 21.03.94.

immediate future on the timetable for detachment and withdrawal of all nuclear warheads from Kazakhstan to the territory of Russia, as well as to determine the procedure for elimination of the strategic offensive weapons, deployed in the Republic of Kazakhstan".<sup>42</sup>

On 28 March 1994, during Nazarbayev's visit to Moscow, Russia and Kazakhstan settled the legal issues related to the SNF in Kazakhstan. The first document signed was a "Treaty on Military Cooperation between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation". It covered a wide range of military and strategic issues, and contained several provisions on SNF. In this aspect the most important thing was recognition by Kazakhstan that SNF military formations in the republic had Russian status. In its turn Russia recognised Kazakhstan's right to compensation for "materials of nuclear forces" to be withdrawn from its territory. The Protocol on talks between Chernomyrdin and Tereshchenko contained special provisions instructing the respective ministries to prepare within three months an agreement on compensation to Kazakhstan for the uranium, and proposals on compensation for strategic bombers and air launched cruise missiles transferred to Russia.<sup>43</sup> Neither of these directives was fulfilled in time.

The second agreement "On the Strategic Nuclear Forces Temporarily Stationed on the Territory of Republic of Kazakhstan" covered the period until all SNF presence in Kazakhstan was liquidated. It addressed a number of technical issues related to the SNF's status and functioning during the transitional period. The procedure for SNF employment provided for consultations between the Russian and Kazakh presidents. General SNF activities in Kazakhstan were to be subject to consultations with Kazakhstan's Defence Ministry. Kazakhstan undertook not to impede the SNF's performance of its functions. It also promised to provide the SNF with communal services, electricity, gas, accommodation and medical care pending withdrawal.<sup>44</sup>

Meanwhile the process of actual withdrawal was already under way. On 22 February 1994 Colonel-General Deinekin, Commander-in-Chief of Russia's Air Force, advised the press that the last four Russian Tu-95MS (NATO designation: Bear H) bombers had been moved to Russia.<sup>45</sup> But after that Kazakhs resumed delaying tactics, by hampering the transfer to Russia of the remaining 1040 ICBM warheads. As witnessed by Colonel-General Merkulov, Russian Defence Ministry representative at the Duma hearings on Russian-Kazakh relations, the withdrawal

<sup>42</sup> Memorandum po itogam vstrechi v Almaty 25 dekabrya 1993 goda Premier-Ministra Respubliki Kazakhstan S. A. Tereshchenko i Predsedatelya Soveta Ministrov - Pravitel'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii V. S. Chernomyrdina // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, p. 138.

<sup>43</sup> Dogovor mezhdru Respublikoy Kazakhstan i Rossiyskoy Federatsiey o voennom sotrudnichestve // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 168-169, 178.

<sup>44</sup> Soglashenie mezhdru Respublikoy Kazakhstan i Rossiyskoy Federatsiey o Strategicheskikh yadernikh silakh, vremenno raspolozhennikh na territorii Respubliki Kazakhstan // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 godi, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moskva: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 163-166.

<sup>45</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report, No.37, 23.02.94.



of nuclear weapons from Kazakhstan had been proceeding "with great difficulties"; the Kazakhs "systematically linked this issue with compensation for the aircraft and highly enriched uranium being withdrawn".<sup>46</sup>

It was only in early 1995 that the controversy over compensation was resolved. At that time, as stated by General Sergeyev, the SNF Commander-in-Chief, only 266 strategic nuclear warheads remained in Kazakhstan.<sup>47</sup> On 20 January 1995 Moscow and Almaty concluded an agreement "On Cooperation and Settling Mutual Accounts during Reprocessing of Nuclear Weapons". The agreement stipulated that highly enriched uranium would be transferred to Russia for recycling into low-grade uranium to be sold later to the United States. Kazakhstan was entitled to a fixed share of the profit from every such sale. Russia's expenses incurred in dismantling nuclear warheads, transporting and recycling the uranium, and sales-related costs were to be deducted from the Kazakh share. Details of calculating such expenses, dates and terms of payments were to be specified in a special Russian-Kazakh contract. Plutonium extracted from the warheads was to be stored in Russia pending a joint decision on its future use.<sup>48</sup> But immediately after signing, implementation of the agreement ran into difficulties, because the Russian Finance Ministry declined to make advance payments for work connected with recycling the uranium.<sup>49</sup> Up to now it is still unknown how much compensation Kazakhstan has received for the uranium.

The situation was somewhat more precise with regard to compensation for the strategic bombers and cruise missiles. In January 1995 Russian Deputy Prime Minister Soskovets authorised an interdepartmental commission, comprising representatives of the Ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs and CIS Affairs, to draft an agreement with Kazakhstan to assist it in creating two Air Force regiments as a form of compensation.<sup>50</sup> The agreement was concluded at the meeting of CIS heads of government in Moscow on 3 November 1995.<sup>51</sup> It provided for the transfer of 73 combat aircraft (21 MIG-29s, 14 SU-25s and 38 SU-27s) to Kazakhstan, as compensation for strategic bombers withdrawn to Russia. However, by October 1997 only 41 planes had been transferred.<sup>52</sup>

It took Russia more than a year to complete the withdrawal and elimination of nuclear weapons from Kazakhstan. But given the complexity of the task this

<sup>46</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyaziam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, p. 119.

<sup>47</sup> New Data on the Strategic Arsenal of the Former Soviet Union // *Jane's Intelligence Review*, June 1995, p. 246.

<sup>48</sup> Soglasenie mezhdru Pravitel'stvom Rossiyskoy Federatsii i Pravitel'stvom Respubliki Kazakhstan o sotrudnichestve i vzaimnykh rasschetakh pri utilizatsii yadernykh boeprilasov // *Bulleten' mezhdunarodnikh dogovorov*, No. 10, 1995, pp. 37-39.

<sup>49</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyaziam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, p. 106.

<sup>50</sup> Ministerstvo Oborony Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Analiticheskiy material o khode razvitiya voennogo sotrudnichestva Rossiyskoy Federatsii s Respublikoy Kazakhstan, No. 335/5/2/244, Moscow [No publisher] 15.04.95, pp. 2-3.

<sup>51</sup> Kazakh-Russian "Breakthrough" Agreement on Military Aircraft, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 13.11.95; Russia Transfers Fighter Planes to Kazakhstan, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 08.04.96.

<sup>52</sup> Russia's Sergeyev to Discuss Cooperation With Kazakhstan, ITAR-TASS World Service, 28.10.97

indicated that the Russians acted expeditiously. Finally, on 25 April 1995 Colonel General Yesin, Russian Strategic Rocket Forces Chief of Staff, made an official statement that all Soviet-era nuclear warheads had been transferred.<sup>53</sup> This was confirmed on 26 May in President Nazarbayev's address to the nation, where he stated that "all deadly warheads have been removed from the republic's territory".<sup>54</sup> Kazakhstan had become a de facto non-nuclear weapon state.

In his memoirs Nazarbayev claimed that the major point of his diplomatic manoeuvring on the nuclear issue was to force the nuclear powers, including the USA, to provide Kazakhstan with security guarantees, and Kazakhstan renounced the nuclear weapons on its territory only after it received them. He claimed that the guarantees were provided in the Memorandum on Security Guarantees signed by the US, Great Britain and Russia at the CSCE summit in Budapest in December 1994.<sup>55</sup> It seems, however, that Nazarbayev overstates in claiming he obtained real security guarantees from the great powers including the USA. The Budapest memorandum does indeed contain a provision that the USA, Great Britain and Russia "confirm their obligations to seek immediate UN Security Council action in providing assistance to the Republic of Kazakhstan... if the Republic of Kazakhstan becomes a victim of aggression or subject to a threat of aggression with use of nuclear weapons".<sup>56</sup> This provision, however, can not be regarded as a real security guarantee. Firstly, the Memorandum deals exclusively with the possibility of a nuclear attack against Kazakhstan. But neither Russia nor China,<sup>57</sup> the countries Kazakhs were most concerned about, would need nuclear weapons in any conflict with Kazakhstan, because their military potential is immeasurably stronger than Kazakhstan's. Besides both are permanent members of the UN Security Council and can veto any decision directed against their actions. Secondly, the only obligation contained in the memorandum is to ask the UN Security Council to do something. With this accomplished, the signatories of the memorandum can claim that they have fulfilled their obligations and not proceed with any practical actions. On the other hand, if they decide to take the matter further they can do this irrespective of, if there is a memorandum or not. In all, the memorandum gave the signatories the right to act as they wished at the time if the situation arises.

It is important to look at the difference between the Kazakh and American interpretations of the document. When visiting Kazakhstan in March 1994 US Secretary of Defence Perry made a statement about the memorandum at a news conference. He said that an agreement involving the United States, Britain and Russia was being prepared which would give Kazakhstan a "security assurance" from the nuclear states, which would assure consultations and help stabilise any

<sup>53</sup> ITAR-TASS, 25.04.95.

<sup>54</sup> Nazarbayev, N., *Na poroge XXI veka*, p. 76.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69, 76.

<sup>56</sup> Memorandum o garantiyakh bezopasnosti // *Kazakhstan i mirovye soobshchestvo*, No.1, 1995, p. 107.

<sup>57</sup> On 8 February 1995 China provided Kazakhstan with similar guarantees to those envisaged in the Budapest memorandum. [Zayavlenie Kitayskogo pravitelstva o predostavlenii Kazakhstanu garantiy bezopasnosti // *Kazakhstan i mirovye soobshchestvo*, No.1(2), 1995, p. 113].

dangerous situations. Perry also clarified that there was "an important distinction" between "security guarantees" and "security assurance": "It is an assurance -- it is not a guarantee. It is not a statement that we would go to war on any issue that arose with Kazakhstan."<sup>58</sup> In practice Perry's statement did no more than confirm the stance taken by Bush administration in May 1992. This was the most the Americans were prepared to offer to Kazakhstan.

Directly relevant to military and strategic issues, and the source of many difficulties in Russian-Kazakh relations, was the Baykonur cosmodrome (space port). Baykonur, in Kzyl-Orda province of Kazakhstan, was a unique facility, sprawling over an area of 6717 sq. km and combining the infrastructure for transportation, storage, assembly and launching of space vehicles, as well as sophisticated communications equipment. Baykonur was especially valuable for launching satellites at high orbits of 20-40 thousand km. It accommodated 15 launch sites for all major types of rockets - "Proton", "Zenith", "Energia", "Molnia", Cyclon", "Vostok" and "Soyuz".<sup>59</sup> The space port provided for launching of all Russian manned spacecraft and telecommunication satellites, 85% of surveillance satellites, including heavy reconnaissance satellites and early warning satellites. In general not less than 50% of Russian space launches were conducted from Baykonur. Approximate value of all fixed capital at the cosmodrome amounted to 7601,8 billion roubles (in prices as on 01.01.94).<sup>60</sup>

After the collapse of the Soviet Union all this was on the territory of independent Kazakhstan which had neither technical nor material capabilities to operate it. Russia, on the other hand, was deprived of its major space base, without which it could not properly continue its space program. Russia had another operational cosmodrome, Plesetsk, on its own territory, but Baykonur and Plesetsk were designed for different tasks, duplicated each other's functions hardly at all, and Plesetsk's geographical position made it unsuitable for launches to high orbits. While visiting Plesetsk in April 1992, Yeltsin said that Russia could not afford the 10 billion roubles (100 million dollars) needed to enable Plesetsk to replace Baykonur.<sup>61</sup> The Kazakh leadership was well aware of this, and decided to extract maximum advantage from it.

The initial documents establishing the CIS made no mention of jurisdiction over Baykonur. At the Minsk summit on 30 December 1991 Yeltsin, Nazarbayev and the leaders of nine other CIS republics signed an Agreement on Joint Activity in Research and Use of Outer Space. It prescribed that "interstate programmes for space research and exploitation" would be implemented on the basis of existing space complexes and infrastructure. For Russia the main problem of this formulation was that there were no interstate programs, and the only country able

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<sup>58</sup> Reuters News Service, 19.03.94.

<sup>59</sup> See adjacent diagram.

<sup>60</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiey E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, pp. 149, 150-151.

<sup>61</sup> Reuters News Service, 29.04.92.



# BAIKONUR COSMODROME



TT&C = Telemetry, Tracking & Command



to conduct a space program was Russia. The agreement also stipulated that "the aforementioned infrastructure for conducting independent programs... is determined by separate agreements by the interested parties".<sup>62</sup> This meant that if Russia wanted to continue using Baykonur, it would have to negotiate a special agreement with Kazakhstan. But Moscow was in no hurry to do so, because under the agreement practical fulfilment of interstate space programmes "in the area of military and dual purpose (military and civilian) space facilities" was delegated to the CIS joint strategic forces. This effectively left most space activity at Baykonur in the hands of the Russian military, which continued to run it from Moscow as in Soviet days.

The first signs of Kazakhs' discontent over Baykonur appeared in late January 1991. The head of Kazakhstan's Defence Committee Nurmagambetov complained in an interview that Kazakhstan did not have the means to control launches from its own cosmodrome.<sup>63</sup> Following that Deputy Prime Minister E.Ezhikov-Babakhanov was quoted as saying that the issue of control over Baykonur would soon be raised with the CIS military.<sup>64</sup>

On 23 February military construction unit at Baykonur mutinied. The mutiny lasted for two days and left three soldiers dead. Barrack blocks and warehouses were burned and looted. But it did not look like a mere spontaneous riot. After arrival of a local television crew and the head of the city administration, the soldiers, mostly ethnic Kazakhs, demanded the removal of several Russian officers, creation of "normal" conditions for service, and a meeting with Nazarbayev.<sup>65</sup> This attached an air of ethnic conflict to the incident. It was also significant that the mutiny occurred less than a week after a Russian official announcement that a joint Russian-German manned mission was to be launched on 17 March.<sup>66</sup> If the soldiers' problems were not resolved in time the flight could well be jeopardised. The dynamics of the whole event was very reminiscent of methods used by Kazakhs on previous occasions when they wanted their own way but were opposed by Moscow.<sup>67</sup> This similarity suggests that the mutiny may have been orchestrated as a warning to Russia that the Kazakhs had ample opportunities to block the functioning of the cosmodrome if control over it was not handed over to Alma-Ata.

On 23 March Russian and Kazakh governmental delegations met in Uralsk in Kazakhstan to discuss a range of bilateral issues, including that of control over Baykonur.<sup>68</sup> They signed seven protocols, including one on jointly supporting operation of the space infrastructure, including Baykonur and Plesetsk.<sup>69</sup> However,

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<sup>62</sup> Agreement on Space Research, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 01.01.92.

<sup>63</sup> Reuters News Service, 21.01.92.

<sup>64</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report No.16, 24.01.92.

<sup>65</sup> Trud, 27.02.92.

<sup>66</sup> Reuters News Service, 17.01.92

<sup>67</sup> Similar events on a larger scale happened in Tselinograd in 1979, in Almaty in 1986, in Novy Uzen in 1989.

<sup>68</sup> Reuters News Service, 23.05.92

<sup>69</sup> Izvestiya, 24.03.92.

this protocol, intended to establish a permanent settlement, hardly suited Kazakhstan; its references to both Baykonur and Plesetsk and to the whole of the space infrastructure were enough to cause the Kazakhs' dissatisfaction. Moscow had a definite interest in Baykonur, but Kazakhstan had none in Plesetsk or other space installations in Russian. Thus their basic differences over Baykonur were not resolved.

This soon manifested itself in new tensions that arose around the cosmodrome. In an unprecedented show of force, the Kazakhs blocked the launch of the Cosmos 2185 reconnaissance satellite scheduled for 29 April. This prompted Yeltsin to intervene personally in the dispute. When interviewed while attending the launch of a scientific satellite at Plesetsk, he said "Kazakhstan is playing up a bit... They want to show us that we have to have some sort of Russian-Kazakh agreement on Baykonur," and added that he would raise the issue with Nazarbayev at the CIS summit in Tashkent on 15 May.<sup>70</sup> Yeltsin's statement was not worded as a threat, but it reflected Russia's serious concern at the situation around Baykonur, and Alma-Ata could not simply ignore it. Besides Yeltsin offered specific solutions. He suggested there were several ways of resolving the dispute, including creation of a joint venture between Russia and Kazakhstan, or Russian purchase of a share of the cosmodrome's real estate.<sup>71</sup>

Yeltsin's conversations with Nazarbayev brought some results. On 25 May 1992 a broad "Agreement between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation on the Procedure for Use of Baykonur Cosmodrome" was signed in Moscow. This was the 'separate agreement', which was mentioned in Article 25 of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance<sup>72</sup>, indicating that both documents were to be taken together as inalienable elements in the Russian-Kazakh settlement. Any Kazakh violation of the agreement on Baykonur could therefore be regarded as violation of the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance.

Though a compromise, the agreement was quite favourable to Russia. The only concession of principle that Moscow had to make was to acknowledge Kazakhstan's jurisdiction. Article 2 of the agreement stipulated that "installations of the cosmodrome 'Baykonur', situated on the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan are its property". But Russia managed to insert a formula into the preamble on the "need to use Baykonur for research and use of outer space in the interests of economy, science, international cooperation and ensuring security of the Commonwealth".<sup>73</sup> It was not binding, but it reflected the spirit of the document, and left room for further argument that Baykonur should be used for common purposes, not only those of Kazakhstan.

<sup>70</sup> Reuters News Service, 29.04.92.

<sup>71</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>72</sup> Dogovor o druzhbe, sotrudnichestve i vzaimnoy pomoschi mezhdru Respublikoy Kazakhstan i Rossiyskoy Federatsiey // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya 1991 -1995 godi, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posolstvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, p. 95.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp. 99-100.

Another Russian success was the provision that both signatories transferred the rights to use Baykonur's real estate and movable property to the CIS Strategic Forces, thus effectively keeping its operational management in the Russian military's hands. In addition Russia received the right for unimpeded import, export and transit through Kazakhstan of "technological equipment, weaponry, military hardware and other material resources necessary for functioning of the Baykonur cosmodrome ", free from duties and even customs inspection. This provision also covered the arrival and departure of officials, technical and military personnel working at Baykonur.<sup>74</sup>

Most importantly, Russia escaped any specific commitment to pay for the use of Baykonur. Obligations to cover costs of maintenance and use of Baykonur's installations, industrial and social infrastructure were only vaguely expressed, the agreement stipulating only that such expenditures should be submitted by the cosmodrome military command and local authorities "to both sides" for endorsement, and that Kazakhstan's expenditures should not exceed 6% of Russia's.<sup>75</sup> But it was not said what Russian expenses would be and they could be as little as Russia saw fit.

Russia's promise, under Article 7 to pay Kazakhstan not less than 15% of the profits derived from commercial launches from Baykonur,<sup>76</sup> amounted to very little in practice. Firstly, commercial launches employing Russian boosters were not yet customary on the international market, and some time would pass before they were. Secondly, Russia could make most such launches from Plesetsk, and retain all the profits. As a result, Kazakhstan's potential income from commercial use of Baykonur was negligible compared to the benefits Russia derived from its use of the cosmodrome. Kazakhstan's decision to agree to such conditions was, probably, the result of its desire to keep intact the Joint Command of the CIS Strategic Forces, and free access to Baykonur played a role of stimulus for keeping alive Moscow's interest in this CIS structure. But Moscow's intention to establish its sole control over the CIS Strategic Forces led to the clash of both countries' interests in relation to Baykonur. In early April 1993 Yeltsin proposed to Nazarbayev to discuss the cosmodrome's future.<sup>77</sup> Moscow wanted the military space forces (MSF) deployed at Baykonur to have Russian status, and the launch facility's defence installations accorded the status of a military space base under Russian jurisdiction.<sup>78</sup> But at that stage Yeltsin's proposals could not be acceptable to Kazakhstan, given its position on the need to maintain the CIS Joint Armed Forces Command. Not surprisingly in May the Kazakh side counterproposed that the MSF formations at Baykonur have joint status, that an interstate joint command and cosmodrome administration be set up to run Baykonur, and a

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 100; 102.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>76</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>77</sup> ITAR-TASS, 09.04.93.

<sup>78</sup> Izvestiya, 02.07.93.

coordinating council set up to manage it, headed by one of Kazakhstan's Deputy Prime Ministers.<sup>79</sup>

When Yeltsin appoint Shaposhnikov Secretary of the Russian Security Council, bringing about the abolition of the CIS Joint Armed Forces Command, it caused Russian-Kazakh complications on the issue of Baykonur. Almaty was frustrated at the transfer of the MSF, including those at Baykonur, to the jurisdiction of the Russian Defence Ministry.<sup>80</sup> The visit to Kazakhstan by Grachev and Soskovets in early July 1993 to attend the launching of the joint Russian-French mission and their corresponding negotiations with Kazakh authorities failed to resolve the disagreements. Grachev said at a press conference that Kazakhstan's proposals to put the cosmodrome's military units under joint control, and to set up an interstate constitutional council headed by a deputy premier of Kazakhstan to manage them were unacceptable. He noted that the cosmodrome was financed entirely by Russia, and could not exist without Russia's technical and financial resources, and that any change in its status might disrupt space programs, and stated that he would insist the Russian status of the cosmodrome's military units be recognised. But Nurmagambetov said, Kazakhstan insisted on making Baykonur a joint facility.<sup>81</sup>

The abolition of the CIS Command gave Kazakhstan a viable legal excuse to renege on its previous undertakings with regard to Baykonur. The May 1992 agreement stipulated that Baykonur's facilities were for use by the CIS forces, not Russian military units. The *de facto* difference was minimal, but formally Kazakhstan was entitled to demand withdrawal of Russian troops, especially since Kazakhstan's post-independence constitution banned foreign military bases. On the other hand Kazakhstan did not want to lose the substantial economic benefits that exploitation of Baykonur could bring about. Politically Almaty understood that complete exclusion of Russia could do irreparable damage to bilateral relations. Besides such exclusion would violate the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, automatically allowing Russia to backtrack on its obligations to Kazakhstan. The Kazakhs therefore developed a concept for using Baykonur which they thought would allow them to achieve both aims, ousting the Russian military, but securing the cosmodrome's future. They proposed creating an international space company with participation primarily by Russia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, and possibly other countries.<sup>82</sup>

The concept of internationalisation of Baykonur was clearly designed to counterbalance Russia's influence by that of others, such as Ukraine. But more importantly, the arrangement focussed primarily on commercial space programs,

<sup>79</sup> Russian-Kazakh Talks on Baykonur End With no Real Result, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 05.07.93.

<sup>80</sup> BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 06.12.93

<sup>81</sup> Russian-Kazakh Talks on Baykonur End With No Real Result, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 05.07.93.

<sup>82</sup> Russian-Kazakh "Public Showdown" at Press Conference on Baykonur, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 06.12.93



marginalising Baykonur's military role and prospectively leading to full demilitarisation. Russia, with its military space program heavily dependent on Baykonur, inevitably could not agree to this arrangement. Another consideration behind the Kazakh move may have been euphoria undamped by technical expertise. They perhaps thought that they had only to open Baykonur to foreign economic interests to find a stream of investment pouring into Kazakhstan. But the reality was different. Technological differences between Russian and Western rockets made it impossible to employ Baykonur for launching both.

The Russian leadership was divided on how to react to the Baykonur's situation. Signs of political contention around the issue were revealed in contradictory statements by Russian officials. On 5 September *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, citing a government source, reported that Russia had decided to sever all links with Baykonur space centre and cease to use it. But this was denied by a Glavkosmos spokesman, who said Russia had too great an interest in the cosmodrome to take such a decision.<sup>83</sup> However the controversy did not end there. On 9 September Assistant Director of the Transmash Design Office Bondarenko told the press that Russia had decided to stop using Baykonur. But Glavkosmos again denied this.<sup>84</sup> There were two opposing camps. Russian Space Agency (RSA) advocated putting Baykonur under civilian administration, generally in line with Kazakhstan's position. But the Defence Ministry wanted Baykonur split into two parts, civilian and military, leaving to itself only launches for military purposes.<sup>85</sup>

Kazakhstan's aspiration to internationalise Baykonur was definitely unacceptable to the Russian military. They wanted to retain full control of their own programs, and exclude all possible outside interference with them. Hence the Defence Ministry's insistence that all or part of the cosmodrome should remain under its control, with the status of a Russian military base. MSF Commander Colonel-General Ivanov during his visit to Plesetsk in September 1994 said quite bluntly that the Russian Defence Ministry did not want to be dependent in launching its space hardware on the policies of any foreign state, including Kazakhstan.<sup>86</sup>

Initially the civilians appeared to be winning. Press reports on 9 September, quoting a RSA spokesman, indicated that a document determining Russia's position on Baykonur was to be submitted to the government before 15 September, and that it acquiesced in transformation of Baykonur into an international space company.<sup>87</sup> But suddenly dramatic events of a higher order intervened, and changed the entire picture. On 21 September Yeltsin issued a decree dissolving the Russian parliament. This led to armed clashes with the

<sup>83</sup> Denial of Russia's Reported Decision to Pull Out of Baykonur, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 06.09.93.

<sup>84</sup> Further Questions on the Future of Baykonur, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 13.09.93

<sup>85</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiei E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, p. 151.

<sup>86</sup> Russian Missile Troops to Be Transferred to Plesetsk, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 03.10.94.

<sup>87</sup> Further Questions on the Future of Baykonur, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 13.09.93.

parliament's defenders in the streets of Moscow on 3-4 October. It was only personal loyalty to Yeltsin of Russia's military command that saved the presidential side from defeat. But before moving to rescue Yeltsin the military exploited the situation to wrest some substantial concessions from him, most importantly a new version of the military doctrine the major of them. It is likely that support of the Defence Ministry position on Baykonur was part of the "package". In any case the October events increased the Defence Ministry's influence in the Russian leadership and their position was taken into account in the subsequent governmental moves with regard to Baykonur. In November the Council of Ministers decided to have a feasibility study made for a new space centre.<sup>88</sup>

Subsequently Russia actively exploited a possibility of full withdrawal from Baykonur to a new cosmodrome as a means of diplomatic pressure on Kazakhstan. This pressure brought some results forcing Almaty to a partial compromise. During Chernomyrdin's visit to Kazakhstan on 25 December 1993, he and Tereshchenko signed a memorandum which dealt with a number of bilateral issues, including the cosmodrome. For the first time the possibility of its lease by Russia was mentioned in a bilateral document. The memorandum also stated that exploitation of Baykonur would be conducted by the Russian government. On the other hand, the memorandum did not specify either the duration of the lease or the amount Russia would have to pay in rent. The status of Russian military units in Baykonur, a question of primary importance for Russia, was to be defined in separate agreements".<sup>89</sup>

Ahead lay a long and intensive period of further tough bargaining on the specific terms of the lease. This revealed itself pretty soon. The memorandum provided for establishing a special "working commission" to prepare an agreement on Baykonur by March 1994, when a summit between Yeltsin and Nazarbayev was to take place. When the Russian and Kazakh delegations began the negotiations in January 1994 the disagreements between them immediately came to the fore. Kazakhstan initially hinted at a figure of \$7 billion in rent payments for two years, which was much more than Moscow was prepared to pay.<sup>90</sup> Its initial offer was for only 80 million dollars a year.<sup>91</sup>

Besides it soon turned out that in signing the memorandum Kazakhstan intended to hand over only part of Baykonur to the Russian military. The Kazakhs continued to insist that the cosmodrome as a whole should be used primarily for economic and scientific purposes. Zhukeyev made clear at a special meeting with journalists that the Kazakh side rejected the Russian Government's proposals for military units to be stationed in Kazakhstan with military base rights, and that the

<sup>88</sup> Russian Space Chief Visits Svobodnyy, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 21.03.94.

<sup>89</sup> Memorandum po itogam vstrechi v Almaty 25 dekabrya 1993 goda Premier-Ministra Respubliki Kazakhstan S. A. Tereshchenko i Predsedatelya Soveta Ministrov - Pravitel'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii V. S. Chernomyrdina // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, p. 138.

<sup>90</sup> Izvestiya, 14.01.94.

<sup>91</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiei E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, p. 159.

Russian Government's conception of Baykonur as primarily as a military installation was wrong. The Kazakhs also refused to drop the idea of turning Baykonur into an international joint-stock company, even though the Russians more than once made it clear that that arrangement was absolutely unacceptable.<sup>92</sup>

On 8-10 February 1994 Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev made an urgent trip to Kazakhstan in the vain hope of settling the most complex bilateral problems, including Baykonur. The talks proved fruitless. Proposals for Baykonur's future outlined by Nazarbayev included Russian troops withdrawing from there, and Russia selling military equipment cheaply to Kazakhstan in return for the right to lease some facilities there.<sup>93</sup> On 24 February Kalybaev, Deputy Director-General of Kazakhstan's Space Agency, said that Kazakhstan would not agree to lease Baykonur to Russia until the status of Russian troops servicing the facility was resolved.<sup>94</sup>

The Kazakhs were apparently raising the stakes. On 14 February a meeting of the President's administration and Cabinet of Ministers was held, to assess the ecological damage caused by use of Baykonur. At a press conference the same day, the ecology department of the administration reported that the cosmodrome had influenced the ecological situation in the Aral Sea basin "in a very harmful, even catastrophic way". Simultaneously it was pointed out that the proposed Kazakh-Russian agreement on Baykonur did not mention ecology, while Russia as successor to the USSR had to provide at least partial compensation for the losses inflicted on the region.<sup>95</sup>

But by now the Russians were already accustomed to Almaty's tough negotiating techniques, and were prepared to respond in kind. Firstly, Moscow linked the problem of Baykonur with the bilateral treaty on military cooperation and other important bilateral documents then under negotiation. Yeltsin refused to meet Nazarbayev and sign any agreement of substance until the question of Baykonur was settled. The scheduled meeting between them was postponed more than once.<sup>96</sup> Secondly, the Russian side began to create the impression that it was seriously considering switching preferences to a cosmodrome in Russia proper. In early February an unidentified MSF official told journalists that the Russian authorities were considering building a new cosmodrome on Russian territory, and named a former ballistic missiles base "in the Far East, 300 km from the Russia-China border" as the likely site.<sup>97</sup> This was confirmed on 9 March by the MSF Commander, Colonel-General Ivanov, who stated officially that Russia would build a major new cosmodrome near the settlement of Svobodnyy in the Far East by the year 2000 to ensure the independence of its space program. He added that the new base would be able to launch manned rockets and heavy Proton boosters, because

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<sup>92</sup> Izvestiya, 14.01.94.

<sup>93</sup> Russian Foreign Minister Visits Kazakhstan, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 17.02.94.

<sup>94</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report, No.39, 25.02.94.

<sup>95</sup> Kazakhstan Calls on Russia to Compensate Ecological Consequences of Baykonur, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 28.02.94.

<sup>96</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report, No.27, 09.02.94.

<sup>97</sup> Reuters News Service, 09.02.94.

of its favourable geographical location (It was just several degrees north to the equator in comparison to Baykonur). Ivanov added, in an obvious bluff,<sup>98</sup> that it would not be expensive to set up the site, because as a former ballistic missiles base, it already had launching equipment.<sup>99</sup> The statement was carefully timed to coincide with the arrival in Almaty of a RSA team led by Director-General Koptev for a new round of talks on Baykonur.

On 14 March General Ivanov flew to the Amur province with a group of officers and industrialists, for talks with the local administration on building Russia's new cosmodrome by the year 2000. After arriving at Svobodnyy, Ivanov claimed that the new cosmodrome would start launching Rokot lightweight rockets as early as 1996, and the new generation of Angara heavyweight rockets, used for placing satellites in geostationary orbit, in the year 2000. He also said that a decision to construct the new cosmodrome was expected to be signed by the Russian Government at the end of March.<sup>100</sup>

Tough bargaining continued until the eleventh hour. At last signs appeared that the Kazakhs were beginning to yield ground. On 17 March Tereshchenko arrived in Moscow and met Chernomyrdin. Baykonur was the central issue under discussion.<sup>101</sup> On 18 March a senior Russian representative at the Russian-Kazakh talks on Baykonur advised that "complete success" had been achieved. The delegations had found solutions to a whole series of points on which they had earlier disagreed. In particular, Kazakhstan's representatives responded favourably to Russia's arguments that the lease should be for at least thirty years. A positive solution also emerged to the issue of the status of Russian military personnel and civilians at Baykonur.<sup>102</sup> This breakthrough paved the way for the Russian-Kazakh presidential summit and signing on 28 March of the "Agreement between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation on the Major Principles and Conditions for using Baykonur Cosmodrome".

The agreement mostly reflected Russia's initial position. Russia leased Baykonur for 20 years, with automatic prolongation for another 10 years if neither side objected. It was probably not as long as Moscow would have preferred, but was at least a long-term arrangement, a major Russian requirement. The conditions of the lease were as follows. Operational management of the complex passed to the Russian MSF. On Baykonur's territory Russian legislation and military procedures and rules would be in force in relation to Russian servicemen, civilian personnel

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<sup>98</sup> Ivanov was clearly counting on Kazakh ignorance of the technology in general, and on no Kazakh ever having been allowed to see what was at Svobodnyy in particular. The need to install new and costly equipment for surface launching of large missiles accounted for its being expected to be five years or more before Svobodnyy could launch large boosters.

<sup>99</sup> Reuters News Service, 10.03.94.

<sup>100</sup> Russian Space Chief Visits Svobodnyy, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 21.03.94.

<sup>101</sup> Kazakh Government Delegation in Moscow to Prepare Summit; Premiers Meet, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 19.03.94.

<sup>102</sup> Russia and Kazakhstan Make Progress in Talks on Baykonur, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 21.03.94.

and members of their families".<sup>103</sup> Thus the agreement de facto gave Baykonur the status of a Russian military base. The annual rent was established at \$115 million, much closer to Russia's initial \$80 million offer than to the initial Kazakh bid for \$3.5 billion. Besides, part of it could be paid on a "compensatory" basis, ie by simply deducting it from Kazakhstan's debt to Russia. Nothing was said about previous ecological damage or Russian compensation for it. The only concessions made by Russia was agreeing to cover the costs of Baykonur's exploitation in 1992-1993 and the provision that the Baykonur commander's appointment would require the consent of the President of Kazakhstan, who would also have a permanent representative at the cosmodrome. Russia also agreed to assist Kazakhstan in "implementing its space projects and in training specialists in space technology".

The agreement on Baykonur permitted substantial reduction of the tensions between Moscow and Almaty, but failed to remove them altogether, because while addressing the major problems with regard to Baykonur, it left a number of technical issues unsettled. They were to be regulated by other agreements, the principal one being the Lease Treaty, to be concluded within three months after the Baykonur agreement came into force. Nevertheless, the initial impression was that the agreement on Baykonur would be implemented without difficulties. The Duma ratified it in June 1994, at the second attempt, and Kazakhstan's parliament did so in July. On 4 August 1994 the question of Baykonur was discussed by the presidium of the Russian government, which approved the main principles and conditions for using the cosmodrome,<sup>104</sup> and on 29 August Chernomyrdin signed government order No. 996, which became the main legal document governing Russian activities on Baykonur.<sup>105</sup> The Treaty of Lease of the Baykonur complex was formally signed by Chernomyrdin and Kazhegeldin in Moscow on 10 December 1994. It was largely based on the agreement of 28 March 1994, and contained a number of clarifications and specifications of that agreement's provisions.<sup>106</sup>

After the signing of the treaty Russian-Kazakh relationships with regard to Baykonur were plagued by permanent wrangling over the financial terms of the lease. In 1994 the Russian draft budget envisaged allocation of \$115 million in rent to Kazakhstan, but it was never paid. In 1995 these allocations were not even included in the Russian budget. Moscow insisted that Kazakhstan should pay its debts to Russia, which Russia assessed at \$1.25 billion.<sup>107</sup> Kazakhstan in its turn revived counter-claims, including compensation for ecological damage caused by

<sup>103</sup> Soglashenie mezhdru Respublikoy Kazakhstan i Rossiyskoy Federatsiey ob osnovnykh printsipakh i usloviyakh ispol'zovaniya kosmodroma Baykonur // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 156-159.

<sup>104</sup> Segodnya, 05.08.94.

<sup>105</sup> Rossiyskaya gazeta, 07.09.94.

<sup>106</sup> Dogovor arendy kompleksa "Baykonur" mezhdru Pravitel'stvom Rossiyskoy Federatsii i Pravitel'stvom Respubliki Kazakhstan, Moscow [No publisher] 23.01.95, pp. 7-9, 11-12.

<sup>107</sup> In a statement on 20 May 1997 Tuleyev said that Kazakhstan's debt to Russia stood at \$US2.3 billion [Russian Minister Responds to President Nazarbayev's Remarks, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 22.05.97].

previous use of Baykonur. Kazakh experts assessed this damage at around \$2 billion, while the Russian Defence Ministry argued that it could hardly exceed \$40 million.<sup>108</sup>

To avoid endless negotiations, Russia and Kazakhstan decided to agree on a "zero option" solution, that is to cancel all debts to each other. This formula found reflection in the Protocol on Settlement of Mutual Financial Claims Between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, signed by the prime ministers on 20 January 1995. It stated that the sides "revoke their claims on each other: the Kazakh side on compensation for the damage, connected with exploitation of the Baykonur complex in 1991-1993; the Russian side on debts of, and credit to, the Republic of Kazakhstan in 1991-1994".<sup>109</sup> But this accord was soon eroded due to its broad interpretation by the Kazakhs, who tried to include Kazakhstan's \$275 million of debts to two Russian companies, Roskontrakt and Rosenergo, in the settlement. Russia rejected these demands, on the grounds that debts between companies, state-owned or not, were not envisaged by the protocol.<sup>110</sup> By the end of 1997 the problem of mutual debts still remained unresolved. Moscow has not allocated a single dollar for rent payments. The problem of settling mutual debts was discussed by Chernomyrdin and Nazarbayev at their meeting on 4 October 1997, but they again failed to reach agreement.<sup>111</sup>

Many Russian experts see the lease of Baykonur as disadvantageous to Russia. Some of them point to its unreliability as a prospective Russian launch site, given the expected onset of political instability in Kazakhstan due to economic depression and deterioration of administrative control.<sup>112</sup> Others argue that Russia spends much more on the cosmodrome than it receives from it. Given the poor condition of the real estate at Baykonur, including the social infrastructure, Russia's obligation, to maintain and develop the material and technological base of a complex which remains Kazakhstan's property, entails substantial financial loss. According to some assessments, in 1994 Russia spent \$185 million on the cosmodrome's upkeep, on top of the annual rental. Other estimates indicate that over the 20 years of the lease, Russia's expenditure on Baykonur will be more than double the value of its fixed capital, or more than enough for Russia to build two similar cosmodromes on its own territory.<sup>113</sup> These estimates were however rejected by RSA Director-General Koptev who said that the rental payments for 20

<sup>108</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyaziam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, pp. 96, 109-110.

<sup>109</sup> Protokol ob uregulirovaniy vzaimnykh finansovykh pretenziy mezhdru Rossiyskoy Federatsiey i Respublikoy Kazakhstan, Moscow [No publisher] 1995

<sup>110</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyaziam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, pp. 89-90, 110-111.

<sup>111</sup> Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 07.10.97.

<sup>112</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyaziam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, p. 138.

<sup>113</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiey E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, pp. 153, 155.

years would be roughly equal to the value of Baykonur's fixed capital and that such payments would be economically justifiable in comparison to a cost of building a new cosmodrome.<sup>114</sup>

Given this difference of opinion, it was no accident that on 4 August 1994 the presidium of the Russian government linked discussion of the problem of Baykonur to the question of building a new Russian cosmodrome near Svobodnyy in the Far East. Although originally a diplomatic tool for bargaining with Kazakhstan, this idea had clearly acquired its own momentum. After the closed part of the sitting ended, Koptev told journalists that the possibility of building a new Russian cosmodrome was under consideration. He noted without much optimism that a total of 4-4.5 trillion roubles at present prices would be needed to implement such a project, that it would take 10-12 years, and that the issue would be finally decided by 1 November.<sup>115</sup> At this stage a divergence of views still existed in Russia's leadership on how to treat Baykonur in long-term perspective.

Interestingly, it was the Russian military which continued to push for the new cosmodrome. This soon became apparent through statements made by the Missile Space Forces leadership. In December 1994 Major-General Venediktov said in Blagoveshchensk that Svobodnyy must fully replace Baykonur as Russia's main space port. He said that Baykonur could be fully operational for another few years, a decade at most, after which all its technical structures would no longer satisfy safety requirements. Venediktov made no bones about the fact that the new space centre would be used primarily for military purposes.<sup>116</sup> On 26 January a similar statement was made by MSF Commander Colonel-General Ivanov in a speech to the Duma. He stressed that Russia wanted to phase out Defence Ministry satellite launchings from Baykonur by the year 2003.<sup>117</sup>

What lay behind the Russian military's position were their distrust of the Kazakh leadership and doubts as to Kazakhstan's reliability as an ally. These fears were based on certain Kazakh actions. In January 1994, when Russian-Kazakh negotiations over Baykonur were in full swing, Kazakhstan signed an agreement with the United States on joint monitoring of outer space and space debris, which could pose a threat to orbiting satellites. During Nazarbayev's visit to Washington in February 1994 Kazakhstan and the United States allegedly concluded an unspecified space agreement which dealt with joint use of Baykonur.<sup>118</sup> Despite direct questions from journalists, Nazarbayev refused to disclose details of the agreement, and confined himself to saying that it related only to know-how and to non-proliferation of US-provided space technology.<sup>119</sup> Some Russian experts saw

<sup>114</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv i svyazam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, p. 102.

<sup>115</sup> Russian Government Approves Presidential Decree on Baykonur Cosmodrome, BBC Monitoring Service: Former, USSR, 08.08.94.

<sup>116</sup> Segodnya, 03.12.94.

<sup>117</sup> Russia to Phase out Defence Satellite Launches from Baykonur in 2003, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 06.02.95.

<sup>118</sup> The agreement in question was, probably, "Inmarsat Technology Safeguards Agreement".

<sup>119</sup> Nazarbayev on Results of His Official US Visit, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 03.03.94.

these actions as "an element of blackmail with regard to Russia".<sup>120</sup> Undoubtedly they increased Russian suspicions of the Kazakh leadership's policies.

These considerations explain why the Russian MSF began moving military space programs from Baykonur to Plesetsk. On 21 September 1994 a group of military experts and engineers led by MSF Commander Colonel-General Ivanov, arrived at Plesetsk to discuss the transfer of a number of facilities belonging to the missile troops. Plesetsk cosmodrome's head, Major-General Ovchinnikov, new launch sites for Zenit, Rus (new version of Soyuz) and Angara (new version of Proton) would be built at Plesetsk.<sup>121</sup>

By now a certain compromise between the MSF and RSA obviously emerged. This was reflected in a document "Program of Development of the Surface Cosmic Infrastructure of the Russian Federation (for the period until 2014)" submitted to the Duma in connection with ratification of the Baykonur Lease Treaty and signed by RSA Director-General Koptev and MSF representative Borisiuk. The document contained the following conclusion: "Implementation of Russian space programs within several forthcoming decades is practically impossible without the use of Baykonur cosmodrome... Together with using Baykonur cosmodrome and allocating funds for its maintenance and modernisation, Russia should ensure further development of the infrastructure for preparing and launching space vehicles from Russian cosmodromes. For this purpose the Plesetsk range must be developed further, and analyses made of the possibility and practicability of preparing and launching medium- and heavy-class rockets from Svobodnyy cosmodrome".

The program stipulated that Svobodnyy be assessed as a prospective launching site for heavy launch vehicles "sending military space apparatus into orbit" starting in 2011. The draft plan proposed that in 2014 Svobodnyy should have five launching pads for three classes of boosters. Functions of space apparatus launched from the cosmodrome would cover such areas as strategic reconnaissance, navigational support, communications and TV broadcasting from geostationary orbits, as well as the "Rokot" program. On the other hand, the plan indicated that in 2014 Baykonur would continue fulfilling all aspects of the Russian space program, including all those designed for Svobodnyy and Plesetsk, and would in addition retain two not duplicated by the other two cosmodromes - piloted space flights and international commercial space launches.<sup>122</sup> This can be interpreted to mean that Russia does not completely discard the possibility of using Baykonur for military purposes in the future. On the other hand, the duplication of all Baykonur's military functions by two Russian cosmodromes gives reason to believe that the proportion of military launches from Kazakhstan would

<sup>120</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiey E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, p. 157.

<sup>121</sup> Russian Missile Troops to Be Transferred to Plesetsk, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 03.10.94; Plesetsk Space Centre Being Refitted to Receive Workload from Baykonur, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 25.03.96.

<sup>122</sup> Pravitel'stvo Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Programma razvitiya nazemnoy kosmicheskoy infrastruktury Rossiyskoy Federatsii (na period do 2014 goda), Moscow [No publisher] 24.01.95, p. 3.



substantially decrease, or cease altogether, and Baykonur be employed for military purposes only in extraordinary circumstances.

On 1 March 1996 Yeltsin signed a decree endorsing the establishment of the second Russian cosmodrome at Svobodnyy. The MSF press service commented that a new cosmodrome, capable of full-weight space launches, would help to completely eliminate Russia's dependence on other countries for launching spacecraft to various orbits.<sup>123</sup> Russia carried out its first launch from Svobodnyy on 4 March 1997, of a Zeya military satellite on a Start-1 booster rocket.<sup>124</sup> There have since been several other launches of low earth orbit satellites from there, indicating that the new cosmodrome's development program is on schedule.

At present Russian policy on Baykonur can be described as gradual disengagement. Russia's military is diminishing its reliance on the Kazakh cosmodrome, pending full withdrawal of military programs, facilities and personnel. In the short term Russia is likely to continue relying on Baykonur for its civilian space program, including commercial launches, and it remains Russia's only launching site for manned space flights. Baykonur's role will be crucial for the successful launching of many components for the International Space Station, but once that station's program is complete, further Russian withdrawal can be expected. Given the previous and current difficulties with Kazakhstan over Baykonur, Russia is unprepared to commit significant funds for future maintenance and upgrading. Hence much will depend on Kazakhstan's own ability to maintain the cosmodrome's operational potential, but there are serious doubts whether it can. Moreover, unfavourable conditions for renting Baykonur forced Russia to search actively for alternative commercial launching sites in other countries. RSA and Russian commercial launch operators have already approached countries such as Australia, Brazil and India, with a view to setting up a commercial cosmodrome on their territory. Launch sites in these countries are geographically advantageous, because they are nearer the equator, much lower rent than that paid for Baykonur, and a more stable and predictable political environment. Russia also intends to solve the problem of manned space flights by developing a new heavy-lift launch vehicle "Rus" (also known as Soyuz 2), designed for launch from Plesetsk.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia had three options for securing its military and strategic interests in the post-Soviet space: maintaining and developing bilateral military relations with the countries of the region, acting within the legal framework provided by CIS, or a combination of both. But in the independence euphoria that engulfed the post-Soviet space, bilateral military cooperation between Russia and other CIS countries presented major difficulties. Any Russian proposal for stationing troops, weapons and military facilities in other former Soviet republics could be interpreted as continuation of Russia's "imperial" policy, with likely negative effects not only in the republics concerned but

<sup>123</sup> Yeltsin Issues Decree Approving Creation of Svobodnyy Cosmodrome, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 04.03.96.

<sup>124</sup> OMRI Daily Digest, No.44, Part I, 04.03.97.

internationally. This was the reason why Russia initially decided to put the major emphasis on multilateral military cooperation within the CIS, though naturally only to the extent that it suited Russia's own interests. The "Basic Provisions of the Russian Federation's Foreign Policy Concept", signed by Yeltsin in April 1993, specifically mentioned Russia's responsibility "for strengthening stability and security on the territory of the former USSR". It contained provisions for developing military and political cooperation with other CIS states with a view to creating an effective collective security system, for protecting CIS' external borders, and for preserving the military infrastructure and installations that constituted an integrated system for ensuring CIS members' military security. The directive attached special importance to developing and improving peacekeeping mechanisms within the CIS with Russian participation.<sup>125</sup>

Kazakhstan has a central role in securing Russia's military and strategic interests in Central Asia. Firstly, it is the largest and most influential of the former Soviet Central Asian republics. Secondly, apart from limited access via the Caspian Sea and Turkmenistan, all surface routes from Russia to Central Asia pass through Kazakhstan. Thirdly, Kazakhstan has the largest Russian-speaking community in post-Soviet Central Asia. And finally, Kazakhstan inherited from Soviet times the largest and most important military infrastructure in all Central Asia. Moscow therefore sought to secure Kazakhstan's support in establishing a collective security structure for Central Asia and Kazakhstan responded positively.

Kazakhstan joined Russia acted as co-sponsor of the Tashkent Treaty, and was one of the first to ratify it (23.12.92), six months before the Russian parliament.<sup>126</sup> Nazarbayev was also the most ardent supporter of a CIS "defence alliance", an idea he first proposed at the CIS summit in Bishkek in October 1992.<sup>127</sup> "Kazakhstan's leadership is firmly convinced, even today, that the security of every sovereign state will be more reliably ensured through collective defence by the countries of the Commonwealth", Nurmagambetov, Kazakhstan's Defence Minister, wrote in a program-style article in November 1992.<sup>128</sup> In a telegram sent to Yeltsin and heads of other CIS states on 18 March 1993, Nazarbayev specifically proposed "establishing clearly functional bodies in a defence alliance, in accordance with the Collective Security Treaty".<sup>129</sup> Nazarbayev's project for a Eurasian Union, put forward in March 1994, contained a special section on defence which envisaged conclusion of a treaty on joint measures to strengthen the EAU member-states' national armed forces and protection of EAU's external borders; creation of a "common defence space" for the purpose of coordinating defence

<sup>125</sup> *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 29.04.93.

<sup>126</sup> *Izvestiya*, 16.05.96; *Informatsionnyy bulletin' Mezhparlamentskoy Assamblei Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv*, No.8, 1995, p. 114.

<sup>127</sup> *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 19.08.92.

<sup>128</sup> "Armed Forces of Kazakhstan: Problems and Prospects", BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 01.12.92.

<sup>129</sup> Nazarbayev Telegram to Yeltsin with Proposals for Strengthening CIS, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 26.03.93.

activities; formation of collective EAU peacekeeping forces, assigned official peacekeeping status by the UN Security Council.<sup>130</sup>

There were several reasons for Kazakhstan to support the concept of CIS collective security. The main one was that it lacked the potential to provide for its own defence. After the collapse of the Soviet Union it met a number of problems in creating its own army. On top of the economic difficulties, Kazakhs, like the other Central Asian peoples, lacked a modern-time tradition of military service, few of them pursued military careers, and hardly any reached senior rank.<sup>131</sup> There was therefore no "pool" of trained indigenous officers to fill the gaps created by the massive post-independence exodus of Slav officers who chose to continue their service in the armed forces of Russia, Ukraine or Belarus. Kazakh military officials admitted that this exodus "caused an irremediable shortage of command, engineer and technical cadres".<sup>132</sup>

Kazakh leaders saw a clear danger coming from instability in neighbouring Tajikistan, which they felt could easily spread into their own territory, and needed military support in order counter it. On 4 November 1992 the leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan met in Almaty to discuss how to end the fighting in Tajikistan, and issued a five-point statement, calling for the Russian 201st Motorised Rifle Division stationed in Tajikistan to maintain a peacekeeping role until a joint CIS peacekeeping force could be formed.<sup>133</sup> Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev attended the meeting as an observer, though it is safe to assume his role was not limited to listening to the others. As Nazarbayev later explained: "Bloody conflict, which engendered real danger of penetration into that country [Tajikistan] of extremism from neighbouring Afghanistan, mobilised us into forming collective peacekeeping forces to protect the Tajik-Afghan border".<sup>134</sup>

On 30 November 1992 at a meeting in the Uzbek town of Termez, the defence ministers of Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and then CIS Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief Shaposhnikov took a decision on a combined CIS peacekeeping force for Tajikistan, including the Russian 201st division, a motorised regiment from Uzbekistan, and a battalion each from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.<sup>135</sup> For Russia it was essential that the operation in Tajikistan be collective, to legitimise it internationally, and to spread its costs. Kazakhstan's willingness to provide a battalion was evidence of its leaders' apprehensions of the danger emanating from Tajikistan. Nevertheless, Nazarbayev faced strong domestic opposition, primarily in Kazakhstan's parliament. At that time power of

<sup>130</sup> Proekt o formirovaniï Evraziyskogo Soyuza Gosudarstv // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, p. 375.

<sup>131</sup> See: Khroustalev, M., Tsentral'naya Aziya vo vneshney politike Rossii, Moscow: MGIMO, 1994, pp. 28-29.

<sup>132</sup> Bakaev, L., Voennoe Stroitel'stvo v Kazakhstane // Kazakhstan i mirovoe soobshchestvo, No.1, 1994, p. 109.

<sup>133</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report, No.214, 05.11.92.

<sup>134</sup> Nazarbayev, N., Kazakhstan: vzglyad na mirovoy poriyadok, razvitie i demokratiyu, Vystuplenie v Kolumbiyskom universitete // Kazakhstan i mirovoe soobshchestvo, No.1, 1994, p. 7.

<sup>135</sup> RFE/RL Daily Report, No.230, 01.12.92. (This decision was endorsed by the leaders of the five states at the CIS summit in Minsk on 22 January 1993. [Reuters News Service, 22.01.93]).

presidents in the CIS states was not yet strong enough and they could not proceed with implementation of such sensitive agreements without parliamentary approval. And parliaments were reluctant to sanction deployment of troops beyond national borders, especially in the areas of inter-ethnic conflicts. This caused delays in the establishment of CIS peacekeeping force in Tajikistan.

On 22 December 1992 Nazarbayev presented the agreement "On contingents of military observers and CIS collective peacekeeping forces", which had been signed at the March 1992 CIS summit in Kiev for ratification by Kazakhstan's Supreme Soviet. The ratification would have opened the way for formation of Kazakhstan's peacekeeping unit for Tajikistan.<sup>136</sup> But two days later the parliament voted not to discuss the issue, on the grounds of insufficient information on the state of affairs in Tajikistan.<sup>137</sup> It then adjourned for the holidays, and Nazarbayev's first attempt to send Kazakh peace-keeping troops to Tajikistan ended in failure.

In January 1993 Marshal Shaposhnikov had to admit that the Tashkent Treaty was "to all intents and purposes inoperative".<sup>138</sup> On the eve of CIS summit in Minsk he again complained that not all states had ratified the treaty, and that only Russian troops were acting as peace-keepers. He said that it was very important "to ensure joint participation in peacekeeping actions". When Yeltsin arrived in Minsk he stated firmly that he would raise the question of Tajikistan, and specifically emphasised that besides Russia "other states must take part in the peace-keeping process".<sup>139</sup>

The CIS Charter adopted by the summit contained a number of provisions on military issues. Article 12 provided for consultations and measures, directed at the "removal of the emerged threat" by peacekeeping operations and if necessary use of armed forces. Article 13 stipulated that member-states must take adequate steps to ensure stability of their external borders, coordinate activities of their border guard forces and other services responsible for border controls.<sup>140</sup> The Charter was signed by seven states, including Russia and Kazakhstan, as well as other Central Asian states at the exception of Turkmenistan. The important element in the Charter was that it was of indefinite duration and was to automatically substitute for the Tashkent treaty after the latter expired.

The signing of the Charter did not however mean the creation of the defence union. Article 15 specifically pointed out that concrete issues of military-political cooperation between member-states would be regulated by special agreements. In the absence of such detailed agreements regulating cooperative

<sup>136</sup> Kazakh Supreme Soviet Discusses General Bill on CIS Peace-Keeping Troops, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 24.12.92.

<sup>137</sup> Kazakh Supreme Soviet Refuses to Send Peace-Keeping Troops to Tajikistan, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 30.12.92.

<sup>138</sup> Shaposhnikov Says It Is Time to Decide on Nuclear Weapons Outside Russia, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 13.01.93.

<sup>139</sup> Shaposhnikov on Future of CIS Nuclear Forces, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 23.01.93; Yeltsin Arrives in Minsk, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 23.01.93.

<sup>140</sup> Ustav Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 267-269.

defence measures the Charter's provisions were doomed to remain another empty declaration. Nevertheless, it meant that the first step towards realisation of Nazarbayev's idea was, in fact, made. And to have the process moving ahead he himself needed to prove a real commitment to joint peace-keeping operations within the CIS. Correspondingly before the forthcoming CIS summit Nazarbayev applied strong pressure on Kazakh deputies, and on 14 April they voted in closed session in favour of sending a battalion to the Tajik-Afghan border, provided it consisted entirely of volunteers.<sup>141</sup> A Kazakh Border Guard battalion was deployed to the border of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region of Tajikistan.<sup>142</sup>

On 7 August 1993 the leaders of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan met in Moscow to discuss the deteriorating situation on the Tajik-Afghan border. Yeltsin told the Central Asians that unless they increased their contributions of men, material and money to the peacekeeping force, he would withdraw the Russian troops. The Central Asian leaders accepted his terms in full.<sup>143</sup> On 24 August the Foreign and Defence Ministers of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan met in Moscow, and reached agreement to establish "collective peacekeeping defence forces" in Tajikistan, under command of a Russian officer, Colonel-General Boris Pyankov, and with headquarters in Dushanbe. The defence ministers also decided on the main supply base to be set up in Tajikistan, and on a standby base in Khorog, capital of Gorno-Badakhshan. Each signatory would finance its own contingent.<sup>144</sup> Russia would contribute 50% of funds to maintain the force, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan 15% each, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan 10% each.<sup>145</sup> On 24 September 1993 the CIS heads of state summit in Moscow formally endorsed these decisions.<sup>146</sup>

Over the period 1993-1995 Kazakh combat losses comprised 36 dead and at least 38 wounded.<sup>147</sup> The Kazakh leadership several times threatened to withdraw the battalion, but did not do so, and remained committed to joint CIS protection of the Tajik-Afghan border. Kazakhstan signed almost all the CIS collective security agreements.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 23.04.93.

<sup>142</sup> *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 29.06.93.

<sup>143</sup> *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 10.08.93.

<sup>144</sup> Five CIS Countries Agree on Peacekeeping Force for Tajik-Afghan Border, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 26.08.93.

<sup>145</sup> Tajikistan Peacekeepers Say Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan Slow in Upkeep Payments, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 13.07.95.

<sup>146</sup> *Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, p. 303.

<sup>147</sup> *Kazakhstanskije novosti*, 24.02.96.

<sup>148</sup> This included such important documents as "The Statute of the Council of Collective Security" (06.07.92), and Agreements on "the Statute of the Council of CIS Defence Ministers" (22.01.93), "Collective Peacekeeping Defence Forces and Joint Measures for Their Material and Technical Support" (24.09.93), "the Statute of the Council of Commanders of Border Troops" (24.09.93), "Decision on the Staff for Coordination of Military Cooperation of the CIS Member States" (24.12.93), "Memorandum on Cooperation in Protecting External State Borders" (24.12.93), "Agreement on Creation of Joint System of Air-Defence" (10.02.95), and "Concept of Collective Security of the Member-States of the Collective Security Treaty" (10.02.95).

The Russian Defence Ministry approved of Kazakhstan's position on collective security, assessing Kazakhstan as "an active participant in the Collective Security Treaty", which "supports the idea of creation of a collective security system on the basis of it". It further stated that Kazakhstan's and Russia's positions on a collective security system generally coincided, and consisted of : unification of main legislative provisions in the fields of defence and security; devising common approaches to issues of putting troops on higher stages of alert, forms and methods of training, operational and combat use, and coordinated mobilisation preparedness of the member-states' economies; reaching agreements on joint use of elements of infrastructure, airspace and waterways; permanent consultations on problems of military construction and armed forces' training; coordinating questions of operational preparation of members' territory for purposes of collective defence; joint operational and combat-training exercises of armed forces and other troops; coordinating military personnel training programs; coordinating plans for developing, producing, supplying and maintaining arms and equipment; working out common approaches to parameters of stockpiling and storing material resources; creating common (joint) air defence and other systems.<sup>149</sup>

But in reality the Russian and Kazakh approaches to the collective security system in Central Asia are far from concurrent. From the very beginning there were obvious problems and contradictions. Kazakhstan tried to evade some of its obligations to contribute to the peacekeeping force in Tajikistan. At the CIS defence ministers' meeting in Ashgabat in December 1993, the force commander, Colonel-General Pyankov, openly criticised Kazakhstan for failing both to send the required number of troops and to allocate funds stipulated by the agreement.<sup>150</sup> This behaviour clearly indicated that Almaty regarded the collective peacekeeping force largely as a convenient way to shift responsibility for fighting and finance onto Russia.

The other problem was that although formally allied to Russia, the Kazakh leadership was still suspicious of Moscow's intentions in Central Asia. Some of Nazarbayev's staff, including U.Kasenov openly voiced such suspicions. Kasenov argued that Russia "seeks to keep its military presence not so much to prevent external threats, as to maintain and strengthen its control over development of the internal situation in the Central Asian states and limit their sovereignty, especially in foreign policy and foreign trade".<sup>151</sup> While addressing Britain's Royal Institute of International Affairs on 22 March 1994, Nazarbayev made it clear that he opposed deployment of entirely Russian peacekeeping forces in CIS trouble spots, warned of hard-line tendencies in Moscow and said the time had come for the Russians to reconcile themselves to the existence of truly independent neighbours.<sup>152</sup>

<sup>149</sup> Ministerstvo Oborony Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Analiticheskiy material o khode razvitiya voennogo sotrudnichestva Rossiyskoy Federatsii s Respublikoy Kazakhstan, No.335/5/2/244, Moscow [No publisher] 15.04.95, p. 4.

<sup>150</sup> Krasnaya zvezda, 24.12.93.

<sup>151</sup> Kasenov, U., Tsentral'naya Aziya i Rossiya: ternistiy put' k ravnopravnym vzaimootnosheniyam, Almaty: KISI, 1994, p. 12.

<sup>152</sup> Kazakhs Refuse Russia Gas and Oil Equity Stakes // Financial Times, 23.03.94.

Reluctant to accept a Russian military presence in Kazakhstan, but unable to provide for Kazakhstan's security with its own resources, Nazarbayev tried to solve the problem by invoking various concepts of alternative collective security mechanisms for Central Asia. At the 47th session of the UN General Assembly on 5 October 1992, he suggested establishment of a new collective security organisation in Asia - a Conference on Interaction and Confidence Measures in Asia (CICMA), clearly based on OSCE. The essence of this initiative was "creation of an effective mechanism of preventive diplomacy in Asia". CICMA should be a system of relations between the states of the region which would guarantee their political and economic independence, territorial integrity and security.<sup>153</sup>

However, progress in implementing Nazarbayev's initiative was unimpressive. The first CICMA preparatory meeting took place in March 1993. It was attended by representatives of 10 states and 2 international organisations. At its third meeting, in October 1993, 26 states and 4 international organisations were represented, and it was decided to create a working group, with a view to preparing a CICMA conference of Foreign Ministers. The group, initially of 14 and later 15 permanent members and 2-3 observers, met three times in 1995, but failed to reach a decision on the Foreign Ministers' conference. Instead a conference of Deputy Foreign Ministers was held in Almaty on 7-8 February 1996, attended by representatives from 23 states (15 members and 8 observers)<sup>154</sup> and observers from the UN and OSCE. The conference decided to complete the drafting of founding documents, and to convene a Foreign Ministers' conference not later than the second half of 1997.<sup>155</sup>

But the conference did not materialise. Instead deputy foreign ministers from 16 countries once again met in Almaty on 3 December 1997. In their final statement they confirmed their commitment to the goals and principles of the UN Charter and expressed preparedness to implement a mechanism of confidence measures and promote cooperation in Asia in order to increase production, develop technologies, encourage international trade and set up joint economic and financial institutions. They decided to hold a conference at the level of foreign ministers in Almaty in 1998.<sup>156</sup> But given the previous unsuccessful attempts to convene such a conference there is no guarantee that it will be held, and even if it will it is not clear to what practical decisions on collective security issues it can actually arrive. In all the political dynamics around the CICMA initiative shows a clear decrease in international interest to it.

Another element in Kazakhstan's national security strategy can be described as diversification of military alliances. Philosophically this concept was

<sup>153</sup> Nurgaliev, B., *Preventivnaya diplomatiya v Azii - problemy i perspektivy* // *Vneshnyaya politika Kazakhstana, Sbornik statey*, Almaty: MID Respubliki Kazakhstan, 1995, p. 202.

<sup>154</sup> Members included: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, India, Iran, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Palestine, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan.

<sup>155</sup> *Soveshchanie po vzaimodeystviyu i meram doveriya v Azii na urovne zamestiteley ministrov inostrannykh del* (7-8 fevralya 1996 g., Almaty) // *Diplomaticheskii kurier* (Almaty), No.2, 1996, p. 50.

<sup>156</sup> 16 Asian Ministers Discuss Regional, International Issues, ITAR-TASS World Service, 03.12.97.

clearly represented in Nazarbayev's recent address to the nation, where he identified as a priority "initiation stability, through the state's foreign policy bodies, of the already emerging strategic parity around Kazakhstan, which would meet our country's long-term strategic interests".<sup>157</sup> Nazarbayev saw the balance of power as desirable, because it permitted manoeuvring between the different poles of world power, and avoidance of slipping into unilateral dependence on any particular country, especially Russia.

In more precise terms these ideas found reflection in the works of some Kazakh military analysts. L. Bakaev, for instance, did not hide his concern at some elements of Russian military doctrine, considering that "increased military danger for Kazakhstan" could arise from its proviso that Russia regards "suppression of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of Russian Federation citizens in foreign countries" as a major source of military threat.<sup>158</sup> Asker Kusmanuli shared these concerns, but saw the above proviso as "not a military danger to Kazakhstan, more an attempt to psychologically influence the situation in the republic".<sup>159</sup> Despite this difference, both analysts evidently see military alliance with Russia as insufficient to ensure Kazakhstan's national security, and call for increased military cooperation with NATO including eventual membership.<sup>160</sup>

The strategy of expanding Kazakhstan's links with NATO was officially outlined by Nazarbayev as early as May 1992, in his program work "Strategy for Kazakhstan's Emergence and Development as a Sovereign State".<sup>161</sup> Although formally in alliance with Russia, and over its vigorous opposition, Nazarbayev opened contacts with NATO, and even welcomed its expansion to the east. In a speech at Columbia University in New York on 16 February 1994 he said: "We regard the initiative of the 'sixteen' to expand NATO as a timely and entirely prospective action, which would serve to strengthen the security system in Europe and adjacent areas. Of special importance for us are the opportunities which are being opened within NATO's Partnership for Peace Program for strengthening regional security and the defence potential of states participating in it".<sup>162</sup> Meanwhile Russia's concerns were aroused by precisely that program's possible negative effects on the CIS collective security system. The Duma Committee on CIS Affairs concluded that the program "will block the prospects for military and political consolidation of the CIS space around Russia" and "invalidate the Treaty on Collective Security, concluded between the CIS member-states". The

<sup>157</sup> Nazarbayev, N., Kazakhstan - 2030: protsvetanie, bezopasnost' i uluchshenie blagosostoyaniya kazakhstantsev, Poslanie Prezidenta strany narodu Kazakhstana // Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 11.10.97, p. 29.

<sup>158</sup> Bakaev, L., Voennoe Stroitel'stvo v Kazakhstane // Kazakhstan i mirovye soobshchestvo, No.1, 1994, pp. 111-112.

<sup>159</sup> Kusmanuli, A., Voennaya bezopasnost' Kazakhstana: realii, problemy, protivorechiya i perspektivy // Evraziyskoe Soobshchestvo: ekonomika, politika, bezopasnost', No.11-12, 1995, p. 51.

<sup>160</sup> Bakaev, L., Voennaya doktrina Respubliki Kazakhstan // Evraziyskoe Soobshchestvo: ekonomika, politika, bezopasnost', No.4-5, 1995, p. 46; Kusmanuli, A., Voennaya bezopasnost' Kazakhstana: realii, problemy, protivorechiya i perspektivy // Evraziyskoe Soobshchestvo: ekonomika, politika, bezopasnost', No.11-12, 1995, pp. 54-55.

<sup>161</sup> Nazarbayev's Strategy for Kazakhstan's Future, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 21.05.92.

<sup>162</sup> Nazarbayev, N., Kazakhstan: vzglyad na mirovoy poryadok, razvitie i demokratiyu, vystuplenie v Kolumbiyskom universitete // Kazakhstan i mirovye soobshchestvo, No.1, 1994, p. 7.



Committee recommended support for Yeltsin's postponement of Russia's adherence to the program, and use of "all possible means... to achieve coordination and a joint position within the CIS in relation to the NATO initiative".<sup>163</sup> These "means" obviously did not work with regard to Kazakhstan.

On 24 January 1995, after a meeting in Brussels with NATO Secretary-General W.Claes Nazarbayev disclosed that they had discussed drawing up "an individual partnership programme for Kazakhstan and NATO" as well as issues pertaining to security on the Eurasian continent. During the meeting Nazarbayev allegedly stated that increasing military cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia did not conflict with the "Partnership for Peace" program.<sup>164</sup> At a conference on foreign policy issues held in Almaty on 15 February 1995, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Tokaev stated that Kazakhstan had "no intention of declining to cooperate with NATO within the "Partnership for Peace" program... NATO's leadership agrees that rapprochement between Kazakhstan and Russia does not contradict this program, because the Russian and Kazakhstan armies remain separate armed forces..."<sup>165</sup>

The same strategy underlay Nazarbayev's proposal to create a Central Asian peacekeeping battalion, without Russian participation, advanced at his meeting with the Presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in the Kazakh town of Dzhambul on 15 December 1995. The presidents agreed that the battalion should be created under UN auspices, as a UN reserve force, including UN provision of financial, material and technical assistance in forming it. They sent an appeal to UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, saying that Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan were ready to join the UN's system of agreements on military reserves and to start consultations with UN experts. They wanted to deploy the new force in southern Kazakhstan, near the border with Uzbekistan, but said it would not just have a regional remit. "This battalion will not be formed for maintaining stability in Tajikistan, where CIS-mandated troops are already acting," said Kazakh presidential spokesman D.Kuanyshev. "It will not be created just as a regional unit, and could even be used in Bosnia or other hot spots".<sup>166</sup>

From the diplomatic angle, a Central Asian battalion under UN auspices was an ingenious idea. It did not have the direct anti-Russian implications of, for example, an approach to NATO. In addition, it was aimed at acquiring non-Russian material support, combat training and equipment, probably free of charge, and was therefore a way of diminishing the Central Asians' military dependence on Moscow. At the same time it opened the way for other powers, primarily the USA, to increase their presence in the region under UN auspices. It was therefore no

<sup>163</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Komitet po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyazam s sootchestvennikami, Vyvody i rekomendatsii po itogam parlamentskikh slushaniy "Programma 'Partnerstvo vo imya mira' i buduschee SNG", Moscow [No publisher] 1994, pp. 2-3.

<sup>164</sup> Nazarbayev Says Military Ties with Russia no Threat to NATO Cooperation, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 03.02.95.

<sup>165</sup> Tokaev, K., Vneshnyaya politika Kazakhstana: podkhody, priority i zadachi // Vneshnyaya politika Kazakhstana, Sbornik statey, Almaty: MID Respubliki Kazakhstan, 1995, pp. 36-37.

<sup>166</sup> Central Asian Leaders Seek Creation of New Peacekeeping Force, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 19.012.95.

surprise that the USA immediately spotted the initiative and offered help. On 3 April an American military delegation led by R. Hunter, US Ambassador to NATO, arrived in Kazakhstan for talks on international and regional security issues and on cooperation on defence issues. Hunter was reported to have told First Deputy Foreign Minister N. Danenov that the USA was willing to assist financially in creation of a Central Asian peacekeeping battalion under UN auspices. Kazakhstan's plans to join NATO's Partnership for Peace program were also approved.<sup>167</sup>

On 5 May 1996, at a meeting in the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek, the Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan agreed to create a 500-strong Central Asian battalion, to be trained under the "Partnership for Peace" program. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan would each provide 40% of its funding, and Kyrgyzstan 20%. At a press conference after the meeting Nazarbayev said that it would be able to acquire vital military know-how, and help quell any disturbances in the three participating states, as well as operate as UN peacekeepers abroad. "We don't have any territorial claims against other states, but we don't want other states to have territorial claims against us," he said.<sup>168</sup> His statement indicated firstly, that Kazakhstan was dissatisfied with existing collective security arrangements and secondly that the battalion might be used to quell internal ethnic unrest. It was not hard to guess against whom it would be used in that event. This also explained why Nazarbayev preferred it to be trained by NATO: absence of Russian connections would be crucial if the force were ever to be used against Russian separatists. In August 1996 the battalion, including troops from all three countries, took part in the cooperative Osprey-96 military exercise under the "Partnership for Peace" at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. The decision to send it to the USA was taken despite Russia's refusal to participate in the exercise.<sup>169</sup>

In 1992-93 Russian-Kazakh bilateral relations in the military sphere were characterised by major difficulties and contradictions. The only major event in this period was signing of the treaty "On Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance". It extended Russian security guarantees to Kazakhstan on a bilateral basis. Article 5 stipulated that in any situation which "threatens peace, or breaches peace in the Eurasian region, or violates essential security interests" of Russia or Kazakhstan, they will consult without delay and if necessary "implement coordinated measures for overcoming such a situation". In case of aggression against either, each pledged "to give each other all necessary assistance, including military".<sup>170</sup> For Kazakhstan this provision was crucial, because the country was

<sup>167</sup> NATO Envoy in Kazakhstan to Discuss Security and Cooperation Issues, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 09.04.96.

<sup>168</sup> Reuters News Service, 06.05.96.

<sup>169</sup> Central Asian Battalion to Take Part in NATO Military Exercises, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 09.08.96.

<sup>170</sup> Dogovor o druzhbe, sotrudnichestve i vzaimnoy pomoschi mezhdu Respublikoy Kazakhstan i Rossiyskoy Federatsiey // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya 1991 -1995 godi, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posolstvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 87-98.

not equipped to deal with any serious threat to its national security, in the unstable region of Central Asia. The most obvious danger was that the civil war in Tajikistan could spiral out into other Central Asian states, including Kazakhstan. Russia also promised to help Kazakhstan to create its own armed forces (Article 3).

Of course, Moscow received substantial military advantages from the treaty too. In Article 4 the parties agreed "to allow joint use of military bases, firing ranges and other defence installations situated on their territories, as well as the use by one side's armed forces of defence installations situated on the other's territory". This provision allowed Russia to station troops and conduct military operations from Kazakhstan, including southward transit of troops. Article 6 said that they "would not participate in any alliances or blocks directed against one of them". This precluded Kazakhstan's joining a military alliance (e.g. NATO) which could pose a potential threat to Russia's security. Theoretically these provisions ensured that Kazakhstan would be effectively kept in the Russian sphere of influence, at least in the military-strategic field.

Formally the treaty consolidated the relationships of military alliance between the two countries. But it did it in rather general terms. To achieve practical realisation of each of the provisions more specific and detailed agreements on military cooperation were needed, and that was where the problems began. According to Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Panov negotiations with Kazakhstan on military questions went "very hard".<sup>171</sup> On 19 August a Russian military delegation, headed by General V Dubinin, the Chief of General Staff visited Alma-Ata. They discussed 12 draft agreements but managed to sign only two.<sup>172</sup> The first dealt with the training of Kazakh officers in Russian military educational establishments, and granted free training for officer cadets from Kazakhstan, a privilege accorded to no other CIS country. The second agreement, signed on 19 August 1992, dealt with transfers of officers and warrant officers between the two countries' armies, and stipulated that such transfers were to be free from interference by either country's military authorities.<sup>173</sup>

By December 1992 Kazakhstan closed four major military test ranges, depriving the Russian military of the ability to use them.<sup>174</sup> Russia in its turn refused to satisfy Kazakhstan's request for arms supplies in 1993 totalling 14.6 billion roubles (at 1 July 1993 prices) due to Kazakhstan's chronic inability to pay

<sup>171</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyazam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, pp. 9-10.

<sup>172</sup> Russia and Kazakhstan Conclude Military Agreements, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 22.08.92; Kazakh Official Hails Mutually Beneficial Defence Agreements with Russia, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 16.09.92.

<sup>173</sup> Soglashenie mezhdru Ministerstvom Oborony Respubliki Kazakhstan i Ministerstvom Oborony Rossiyskoy Federatsii o poryadke prokhozheniya voennoy sluzhby litsami ofiterskogo sostava, praporschikami i michmanami ot 19 avgusta 1992 g. // Zakonodatel'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan ob organakh oborony, pravosudiya, bezopasnosti i pravoporyadka, Chast 1 / Pod obschey redaktsiey Voennogo Prokurora Respubliki Kazakhstan U.A.Khitrina Almaty: Zheti Zhargi, 1996, p. 223.

<sup>174</sup> "Armed Forces of Kazakhstan: Problems and Prospects", BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 01.12.92.

its bills.<sup>175</sup> Overall in 1993 Russia and Kazakhstan concluded only three minor military agreements. Two were signed by prime ministers at the CIS summit in Minsk on 22 January 1993. The first regulated the procedure for using the remaining test ranges in Kazakhstan, the second established principles for mutual material and technical maintenance of both countries' armed forces. The third agreement, signed by the Prime Ministers in Almaty on 25 February 1993, covered cooperation and interaction on border issues. These agreements were of secondary importance, and did not establish a framework for comprehensive military cooperation. During Nazarbayev's visit to Moscow on 26-27 February, Russia and Kazakhstan reached an understanding to draft a bilateral agreement on military cooperation within a month.<sup>176</sup> But the subsequent negotiations dragged on for over a year.

It was only in 1994 the emphasis in Russian-Kazakh military relations began to shift to a bilateral basis. This was probably a result of the abolishment of the CIS Joint Armed Forces High Command and realisation that the Tashkent Treaty would not provide an effective mechanism for military cooperation. During 1994 the Russian Defence Ministry actively worked with Kazakhstan to find solutions to the following problems: organisation of communications and warning; procedure for interaction between Kazakhstan and Russian air defences; joint planning and use of military formations; inter-state military transportation; status of Russian military formations in Kazakhstan; training of Kazakhstan officers in Russian military-educational establishments; social guarantees to personnel serving in Kazakhstan; status of several military installations in Kazakhstan, including four test ranges and the "Balkhash" Missile Attack Warning Centre.<sup>177</sup> Some of these questions were mentioned in two key documents, the "Treaty between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation on Military Cooperation" and the "Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Russian Federation on Military and Technological Cooperation" concluded in Moscow on 28 March 1994.

Besides a large block of provisions on nuclear weapons (which duplicated formulas contained in the agreement on strategic nuclear forces) the treaty mentioned a number of issues which Russia had actively sought to resolve. Article 4 permitted the signatories to lease military installations and facilities to each other, thus opening the way to agreements on the test ranges. Article 8 envisaged concluding special agreements on "joint planning and use of troops" and "joint training of control bodies and troops". Article 10 bound them to coordinate their activities in the military intelligence field, and not to conduct military operations or

<sup>175</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiye E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, pp. 138, 146.

<sup>176</sup> Russia and Kazakhstan Agree on Closer Economic and Military Cooperation, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 03.03.93.

<sup>177</sup> Ministerstvo Oborony Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Analiticheskiy material o khode razvitiya voennogo sotrudnichestva Rossiyskoy Federatsii s Respublikoy Kazakhstan, No.335/5/2/244, Moscow [No publisher] 15.04.95, p. 2.

espionage against each other. Article 19 dealt with communications, warning and inter-state transportation, and said that "the sides will keep all existing systems of liaison, anti-aircraft and anti-missile defences, warning and communications, and will take agreed measures for their development". The signatories undertook to cooperate in military inter-state transportation, and to conclude a special agreement on this issue, to retain joint airspace for military and civil flights, and a unified system for controlling them.<sup>178</sup>

Kazakhstan also obtained some advantages. One such was in Article 11, which provided for agreement on joint use of naval forces in the Caspian Sea. Kazakhstan had neither a navy nor trained sailors, so Russian assistance in this area was essential. Article 17 stipulated that arms and military equipment be supplied at domestic, not world, prices. Article 18 retained the free of charge regime for educating and training in Russia Kazakh officers and warrant officers.

Article 1 of the agreement "On Military and Technological Cooperation" stipulated that the signatories would ensure preserving ties between designers and manufacturers of military equipment; supplying each other with military products and documentation on manufacturing, maintenance and exploitation of military equipment; coordinating mobilisation plans; Article 2 obliged them to define the types and quantities of military supplies for each other, and the conditions and forms of payment for them, in special annual agreements. Under Article 4 they agreed to cooperate in the arms trade with third countries. Each also undertook not to sell or give military equipment supplied by the other, nor information about it, to third countries "without previous written consent of the supplier".<sup>179</sup>

The agreement "On Military and Technological Cooperation" was mostly tailored to satisfy Kazakhstan's needs. It was Kazakhstan that needed Russian military supplies, not vice-versa. Although (and because) it inherited a large part of the former Soviet arsenal, Kazakhstan remains highly dependent on Russia for military hardware and spares. Kazakhstan's military-industrial complex is poorly developed. It has neither enterprises manufacturing complete military equipment, nor the material base for repairing them.<sup>180</sup> One major problem is that most weapons systems produced in Kazakhstan in Soviet times were intended for the Navy.<sup>181</sup> Russia, however, is happy to continue receiving naval weapons from Kazakhstan, because this saves it the trouble and expense of converting enterprises to produce them itself. At present defence enterprises in Kazakhstan continue to supply 200 types of naval weapons, equipment and components to 45 Russian plants, including torpedoes, mine-torpedo and mine-rocket complexes, air- and

<sup>178</sup> Dogovor mezhdru Respublikoy Kazakhstan i Rossiyskoy Federatsii o voennom sotrudnichestve // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 170-174.

<sup>179</sup> Soglashenie mezhdru Pravitel'stvom Respubliki Kazakhstan i Pravitel'stvom Rossiyskoy Federatsii o voenno-tekhnicheskoy sotrudnichestve // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 179-180.

<sup>180</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiiy E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, pp. 138, 146.

<sup>181</sup> Spanov, M., Konversiya v Kazakhstane: realii i perspektivy // Evraziyskoe Soobshchestvo: ekonomika, politika, bezopasnost', No.2, 1995, p. 65.

ship-laid sea-bed mines, contact and non-contact trawls, shore defence missile complexes, onboard equipment for cruise missiles, and steering-control systems for submarines.<sup>182</sup> Russia is also interested in supplies of strategic raw materials from Kazakhstan; were there no agreement, it could still purchase them, but would have to pay higher free market prices.

The general impression is that the treaty "On Military Cooperation" and the agreement "On Military and Technological Cooperation" were comprehensive but not well prepared, and resembled mere declarations of intent. They defined spheres of interest of both Russia and Kazakhstan in military cooperation, and indicated potential agreements of substance, but they contained very few specific obligations. Their shortcomings revealed themselves pretty soon, and many important provisions simply remained on paper. For example, in 1994 Russia again refused to fulfil Kazakh requests for weapon and equipment supplies, because of Kazakhstan's inability to pay.<sup>183</sup> Kazakhstan accused Russia of failing to adhere to the letter of the treaty, alleging that Moscow had demanded payment at world, not domestic, prices.<sup>184</sup> Disagreements also spread into the sphere of military education. Kazakhstan expected that under Article 18 free education of Kazakhs in Russian military-educational institutions, provided under the 1992 agreement, would continue. But the Russian Defence Ministry suddenly began demanding payment of fees.<sup>185</sup>

According to Kazakh military experts, in 1994 achievements in military cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan found reflection "primarily in a number of mutually signed agreements, leaving general military problems practically unsolved".<sup>186</sup> This conclusion seems to be substantiated. But it is also important to identify the reasons for it. Most probably Russia's uncooperativeness was deliberate policy. Moscow put restraints on bilateral military cooperation while waiting for progress on a number of issues of primary importance for Russia, such as test ranges, status of military formations and inter-state transportation. Besides Russia obviously conditioned its military cooperation with Kazakhstan on progress in negotiations on Baykonur and fulfilment of Kazakhstan's obligations to remove nuclear warheads to Russia. It was only after considerable progress was made on these matters that a real turn for the better occurred in Russian-Kazakh military relations.

The turn for the better in Russian-Kazakh military relations occurred in autumn 1994, first on the issue of cooperation in protecting CIS external borders. On 8 September 1994 Russia and Kazakhstan signed an agreement, dealing with transportation through Kazakhstan of border guard troops, materials and equipment in the interests of protecting the CIS' external borders. In accordance

<sup>182</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiey E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, p. 139.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>184</sup> Bakaev, L., Voennoe sotrudnichestvo Rossii i Kazakhstana: sostoyanie, problemy, perspektivy, p. 50.

<sup>185</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>186</sup> Ibidem.

with this agreement, Kazakhstan pledged unimpeded and free transit to Russian border guards protecting the external borders of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, and undertook to ensure fulfilment of schedules and security of transportation through its territory. The agreement covered all forms of transit - by air, rail road, sea or rivers.<sup>187</sup> This was followed on 21 October 1994 by the treaty "On Cooperation in Protecting External Borders".

The parties agreed that with open borders between them, protection of the external borders was their common duty (Article 3). In the event of destabilisation or threat of destabilisation anywhere along the external border, they pledged immediate consultation and joint measures to restore stability (Article 4). They undertook to coordinate their activities and take joint measures against terrorist acts, illegal traffic in drugs, weapons and other contraband, illegal entry to and exit from Russia and Kazakhstan (Article 4), and to cooperate in conducting intelligence operations "in the interests of protecting the external borders" (Article 7). Russia promised to assist Kazakhstan in training officers and warrant officers for border guard service, and to supply Kazakh border troops with military and technical equipment (Articles 8 and 9). Russia and Kazakhstan agreed to form a Consultative Control Council, consisting of the Commanders-in-Chief of Russia's and Kazakhstan's Border Guard Forces, their Deputies, and other persons appointed by them. Its main functions included: ensuring fulfilment of the treaty; consultations on measures for improving efficiency of border protection; determining current and prospective needs for officers; exchanging information on questions of common interest; organising cooperation between Border Guard troops in situations of destabilisation or threat of destabilisation at the external borders; developing and implementing proposals to unify legislation on border guards' functioning; taking decisions on training at border guard military-educational establishments; consultations on questions of military equipment deliveries.<sup>188</sup>

In December 1994 - January 1995 Russia and Kazakhstan signed ten more agreements on bilateral military cooperation, some of them of utmost importance for Moscow.<sup>189</sup> The countries finally agreed on conditions of lease of such

<sup>187</sup> Soglasenie mezhdru Pravitel'stvom Rossiyskoy Federatsii i Pravitel'stvom Respubliki Kazakhstan o mezhgosudarstvennykh voinskiykh perevozkakh pogranichnykh voysk i gruzov dlya ikh obespecheniya v interesakh okhrany vneshnikh granits gosudarstv-uchastnikov Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv, Moscow [No publisher] 1994, pp. 17-18.

<sup>188</sup> Dogovor mezhdru Rossiyskoy Federatsiey i Respublikoy Kazakhstan o sotrudnichestve v okhrane vneshnikh granits, Moscow [No publisher] 1994, pp. 5-6, 13-14.

<sup>189</sup> The agreements included: "On the procedure for Maintenance and Use of the Missile Attack Warning Centre "Balkhash"; "On Air Defence Facilities of the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan, and Their Joint Operation"; "On Issues of Joint Planning of the Armed Forces in the Interest of Mutual Security of the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan"; "On conditions of Use and Lease of the Test Range "Emba"; "On Conditions of Use and Lease of the Sary-Shagan Test Range and Maintenance of the City of Priozersk"; "On Conditions of Use of the 929th State Aircraft Test Centre (facilities and ranges located on the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan) of the Defence Ministry of the Russian Federation"; "On Conditions of Use of the 4th State Central Test Range (facilities and ranges located on the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan) of the Defence Ministry of the Russian Federation"; "On Status of Military Formations of the Russian Federation Temporarily Stationed on the Territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan"; "On Organisation of Military Inter-State Transport on Behalf of the Russian Defence Ministry and

strategic military objects as "Balkhash" Missile Attack Warning Centre and test ranges: "Emba" (tactical anti-aircraft defence systems), "Sary Shagan" (strategic anti-aircraft and anti-missile defence systems, including laser weapons), 929 GLIC (tests of military aircraft) and 4GSP (State Central Test Range). The agreements were modelled on a standard pattern. The objects were given for use and administration by the Russian military, their commanders to be appointed by the President of Russia after consulting the President of Kazakhstan. Russia undertook to restore and maintain the objects' infrastructure, to conduct tests within the ranges' limits, to ensure security of works and missile launches, allow Kazakhstan's armed forces to use the ranges after consulting with the Russian side, improve the ecological situation at the objects, provide for timely cleansing of them, removal of hazards caused by accidents, and compensation for damage resulting from such accidents. The agreements were for ten years with automatic prolongation for another ten years if neither side declared intent to terminate them six months before the end of each ten year period. But the agreements could be suspended in case the sides failed to agree on, or subsequently breached, the conditions of lease.<sup>190</sup>

Another very important agreement was the one on the status of Russian military formations in Kazakhstan. It placed Russian military units in their deployment areas in Kazakhstan under Russian legislation and Russian military procedures, provided they did not contravene international law, and put supervision over their compliance with Russian legislation into the hands of the appropriate Russian authorities. Russian units could employ citizens of Kazakhstan. (Article 2), but should respect Kazakhstan's sovereignty and legislation, not interfere in its internal affairs, nor take part in its domestic political life, including internal conflicts. (Article 3). Russian military units could leave their bases or enter or leave Kazakhstan only after consultation with Kazakhstan's Defence Ministry, and the same applied to flights by Russian military aircraft in Kazakhstan's airspace. (Article 6). Counterintelligence protection of Russian military units, and operations relating to Russian personnel or members of their families, would be conducted by Russia's counterintelligence services. (Article 11). Each country undertook to compensate the other for material damage resulting from Russian military activities or actions by Kazakh authorities, citizens or organisations affecting Russian units (Article 22). The agreement would be in force

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Payments for It"; "On Contract Military Service and the Status of Russian Federation Citizens in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan".

<sup>190</sup> Soglashenie mezhdru Rossiyskoy Federatsii i Respublikoy Kazakhstan ob usloviyakh ispolzovaniya i arendy poligona Emba, Moscow [No publisher] 1995; Soglashenie mezhdru Rossiyskoy Federatsii i Respublikoy Kazakhstan ob usloviyakh ispolzovaniya i arendy ispitatel'nogo poligona Sary Shagan i obespechenii zhiznedeyatelnosti g. Priozerska, Moscow [No publisher] 1995; Soglashenie mezhdru Rossiyskoy Federatsii i Respublikoy Kazakhstan o poryadke ispolzovaniya 929 Gosudarstvennogo letno-isпитatel'nogo tsentra (ob'iekty i boevyye polya, razmeshchennye na territorii Respubliki Kazakhstan) Ministerstva oborony Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Moscow [No publisher] 1995; Soglashenie mezhdru Rossiyskoy Federatsii i Respublikoy Kazakhstan o poryadke ispolzovaniya 4 Gosudarstvennogo tsentral'nogo poligona (ob'ekt i boevyye polya, razmeshchennye na territorii Respubliki Kazakhstan) Ministerstva oborony Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Moscow [No publisher] 1995.







for ten years, and would be extended automatically for another ten, unless either side gave six months' notice of intent to terminate it.<sup>191</sup>

Of crucial importance was the agreement allowing transportation through Kazakhstan of Russian troops and military equipment. It covered rail, road and air transportation, but dealt mainly with rail transport, most significant for Russia. It placed responsibility for administering such transportation on the Central Military Communications Directorate of the Russian Defence Ministry, and the Military Communications Service of Kazakhstan's General Staff, which were to resolve all rail transport questions cooperatively. The Russian side would prepare an annual schedule for military trains, and notify its Kazakh counterpart before 1 November of the preceding year. Applications to dispatch military trains were to be sent "to the military-transport institutions after these transportations (supplies) have been endorsed by the relevant authorities of both sides". (Article 7). The Russian and Kazakh transport organisations would allocate rolling stock, locomotives, materials for securing weapons and equipment, train crews, loading and unloading equipment, and ensure scheduled movement and security of the troops and equipment through their territory. (Article 9). Overflights by military aircraft would also take place only after consultations with the "appropriate authorities", responsible for air transportation, and controlled by territorial air transport authorities. (Article 12). Transport by road could be conducted "either singly or in column, on the basis of plans and applications, and after obtaining agreement from the appropriate authorities". (Article 13). The agreement was to be valid for five years, and would be automatically extended for subsequent five year periods unless either side declared intent to terminate it six months before the expiry of each five-year period.<sup>192</sup>

This agreement, together with the earlier one on transporting border guard troops, finally resolved one of Russia's most acute strategic problems, stability of lines of communication to the CIS' southern border. Its only disadvantage for Russia was the procedure for obtaining permission to transport, which could become victim to bureaucratic inefficiency, and hamper the prompt movement of troops in crisis situations. But generally the agreement served mostly Russian interests, since it is difficult to see what need Kazakhstan would have to transport troops through Russia.

Thus despite mutual objurgation, scolding and scuffling, Russia and Kazakhstan in 1995 moved substantially closer in their bilateral military ties. By the mid-1995 the process of building a solid legal base for bilateral military cooperation was generally complete. By October 1997 they had signed 46 treaties

<sup>191</sup> Soglashenie mezhdru Rossiyskoy Federatsiey i Respublikoy Kazakhstan o statuse voinskiikh formirovaniy Rossiyskoy Federatsii vremenno nakhodyashchikhsya na territorii Respubliki Kazakhstan, Moscow [No publisher] 1995, pp. 1-12.

<sup>192</sup> Soglashenie mezhdru Pravitel'stvom Rossiyskoy Federatsii i Pravitel'stvom Respubliki Kazakhstan ob organizatsii voinskiikh mezhgosudarstvennykh perevozok v interesakh Ministerstva oborony Rossiyskoy Federatsii i rasschetakh za nikh, Moscow [No publisher] 1995, pp. 3-6.

and agreements, covering almost every possible sphere of military relations.<sup>193</sup> These agreements formalised a deep Russian involvement in ensuring Kazakhstan's defences, and in return bound Kazakhstan tightly to Russia in the military field. Their conclusion helped Moscow to solve some important military and strategic problems related to its interests in Central Asia. In the event of an international crisis, Russia could rely on using Kazakhstan's territory for forward defence, power projection, logistical support and mobilisation of extra personnel into the Russian army. It ensured stability of troops and armaments transportation to the CIS' southern border, facilitating a rapid buildup of military power there. Finally, the Russian military presence in Kazakhstan was legally validated, retaining Kazakhstan in Russia's sphere of military influence, and ensuring protection of the ethnic Russian population in the event of inter-ethnic violence.

These developments made for a fairly optimistic forecast by the Russian Defence Ministry with regard to military cooperation with Kazakhstan.<sup>194</sup> Kazakh official experts also hailed Russian-Kazakh military relations as an alliance. For example Bakaev unhesitatingly called Russia Kazakhstan's "strategic ally".<sup>195</sup> At a press conference in Moscow on 16 May 1997 Nazarbayev confirmed the alliance nature of relations with Russia by referring to the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, and specifically stating that in case of an attack against Russia or Kazakhstan, both countries would defend each other by all available means, including armed forces.<sup>196</sup>

Nevertheless, some Russian foreign policy analysts expressed scepticism about Kazakhstan's reliability as a military ally. S. Solodovnikov, a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Strategic Studies at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, stated at the Duma hearings on Russian-Kazakh relations that none of the treaties and agreements with Kazakhstan was working, and "there can be 100,

<sup>193</sup> Russia's Sergeyev to Discuss Cooperation with Kazakhstan, ITAR-TASS World Service, 28.10.97

<sup>194</sup> The Defence Ministry's analytical report contained the following conclusions: "...It is advisable to pursue the following directions of Russia's military cooperation with Kazakhstan: (1) to implement understandings reached in the agreements signed in the fields of military and military-technological cooperation; (2) to develop integrationist processes both between Russia and Kazakhstan, and within the CIS in economic, financial, customs, political, military and humanitarian spheres, in the interests of forming a union (confederative) state, primarily on the basis of the Collective Security Treaty and the Declaration of 20 January 1995; (3) to consult on military and technological policy (production, purchase, supplies of military equipment to national armed forces) and interests of defence ministries in the field of training of military specialists for national armed forces of both states. To create conditions and fulfil potential for unifying the existing military and technological base of both states; (4) to develop a common military doctrine and joint concept for construction, maintenance and logistics for national and joint armed forces and command over them; (5) to plan, and later implement measures for joint (common) protection of state borders, formation and use of joint (coalition) groups of forces in extraordinary circumstances (time of war); (6) To work out normative and legal bases for creation and functioning of a union (confederative) state within the CIS collective security system, hereby specifying the conditions on which other CIS member-states can be admitted to the planned union (confederation)". (Ministerstvo Oborony Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Analiticheskiy material o khode razvitiya voennogo sotrudnichestva Rossiyskoy Federatsii s Respublikoy Kazakhstan, No.335/5/2/244, Moscow [No publisher] 15.04.95, pp. 5-6).

<sup>195</sup> Bakaev, L., *Voennoye doktrina Respubliki Kazakhstan // Evraziyskoe Soobshchestvo: ekonomika, politika, bezopasnost'*, No.4-5, 1995, p. 48.

<sup>196</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 28.05.97.

200 and 300 agreements but they remain on paper".<sup>197</sup> Experts at the Russian Institute of Strategic Studies noted that during his visits to the USA and Western Europe in 1994-1995, Nazarbayev "more than once spoke on issues involving, among other things, Russia's security interests, in a way somewhat contrary to an allied approach...". This was interpreted as "an element of pressure on Russia to make it more conciliatory over a whole range of issues, including the military sphere".<sup>198</sup> These judgements are not unfounded, and reflect elements of instability in the military and strategic relationships between Russia and Kazakhstan.

It is obvious that certain undercurrents of uneasiness, suspicion and mistrust continue to plague Russian-Kazakh military relationships. Thus after the agreements on the test ranges had been signed, the talks on the lease treaties dragged on. Most of the differences revolved around procedure for and amounts of rent payments. A Russian Defence Ministry report said that some substantial differences emerged over determining the cost of individual facilities, characteristics of weapons to be tested, and amount of land tax to be levied. The Russian Defence Ministry representative at the Duma hearings on Russian-Kazakh relations, Lieutenant-General Merkulov, publicly described the Kazakh negotiators' approach as "unconstructive".<sup>199</sup> Only on 18 October 1996 were treaties on leasing the ranges finally signed by Chernomyrdin and Kazhegeldin.<sup>200</sup>

But immediately afterwards, the Kazakh leadership initiated a public campaign against Russian use of the ranges. From December 1996 *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* began to publish regular articles under the rubric "Military Ranges - Bleeding Wounds on the Body of Kazakhstan". In one such article E. Gabbasov, a member of Kazakhstan's Senate Committee for International Relations, Defence and Security called for the ranges to be closed down, and also complained that the proposed rent for their use was ridiculously low at \$26.5 million dollars, and should be around \$1.5 billion.<sup>201</sup> Following the article a group of members of the Senate and Majilis sent a collective letter to Nazarbayev, demanding closure of the ranges.<sup>202</sup> It is likely the campaign was sanctioned by Nazarbayev himself, to secure either a higher rent for the ranges or new concessions from Russia in other matters. Naturally, the campaign caused strong displeasure in Moscow.<sup>203</sup>

In November 1996 in Bishkek defence officials from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan decided to hold the first international military exercises

<sup>197</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyaziam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, p. 142.

<sup>198</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiei E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, p. 119.

<sup>199</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy Komiteta po delam Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv i svyaziam s sootchestvennikami "O rossiysko-kazakhstanskikh otnosheniyakh", Moscow [No publisher] 18.04.95, p. 121.

<sup>200</sup> Kazakhstan and Russia Sign Cooperation Agreements, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 23.10.96.

<sup>201</sup> Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 11.12.97.

<sup>202</sup> Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 24.12.96.

<sup>203</sup> Russian Minister Responds to President Nazarbayev's Remarks, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 22.05.97.

in Central Asia under the "Partnership for Peace" program.<sup>204</sup> The Russians could do nothing to stop it, so decided to take part, if only to validate their regional presence. On 15 September the exercise, termed "Centrazbat-97", was held in the Sayram district of South Kazakhstan province. Besides the Central Asian battalion, 500 American, 40 Turkish and 40 Russian troops took part. The exercises proved the ability of the USA, Turkey and Russia to deliver airborne troops to Kazakhstan. The scenario of the exercise assumed a military conflict between the government and separatists had erupted, and UN "collective peacekeeping troops" had been sent to prevent the separatists' capturing Sayram airport, where they intended to receive weapons and ammunition flown in from an unidentified neighbouring state.<sup>205</sup> In principle such a scenario could be directed at Islamic militants wanting to break away from secular Kazakh state to form their own Islamic republic and being supported from the territory of Afghanistan. On the other, the scenario could be equally directed against potential Russian separatists, for example, in Semirechye, where large Russian population, but also in other areas. Kazakh leadership could not afford to stage such an exercise in the northern provinces, simply because in that case it would have been clearly directed against ethnic Russians and would have caused political complications.

According to some Russian experts Kazakhstan spies on some Russian military installations on its territory.<sup>206</sup> Russia also expressed concern over the US-Kazakh remote sensing experiment in Kazakhstan near the Russian border involving US Orion P-3 aircraft, claiming it was an intelligence gathering exercise.<sup>207</sup> This question was raised by Primakov during his negotiations with Tokayev at their meeting in Moscow on 26 June 1997. Tokayev replied that Kazakhstan had informed Russia about the experiment, and emphasised that as an independent country Kazakhstan has a right to conduct any "scientific experiments" on its territory.<sup>208</sup>

On 28 October 1997 Russian Defence Minister Sergeyev arrived in Almaty on a three-day visit. His negotiations with the Kazakh side concentrated on sorting out outstanding military issues. During the meeting with Nazarbayev on 29 October Sergeyev promised to hand over four more SU-27 aircraft by the end of 1997, as compensation for strategic bombers withdrawn from Kazakhstan. They also discussed creation of a joint security system in Central Asia, with Russian participation.<sup>209</sup> The negotiations resulted in signing several documents. One was an agreement between the Defence Ministries on joint planning of operational activities and training of Russian and Kazakh military personnel. Joint command

<sup>204</sup> Meeting on Central Asian Military Exercises Ends in Kyrgyzstan, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 09.11.96.

<sup>205</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 19.09.97.

<sup>206</sup> *Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya* / Pod obschey redaktsiey E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, p. 120.

<sup>207</sup> Russia Denounces Plans for US-Kazakh Reconnaissance Mission, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 28.06.97.

<sup>208</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 28.06.97.

<sup>209</sup> President Nazarbayev, Russian Defence Minister Discuss Military Cooperation, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 30.10.97.

staff exercises were scheduled to be held in 1998. The Russian and Kazakh armed forces' Chiefs of General Staff were to plan them jointly.

Sergeyev and Kazakh Defence Minister Altynbayev initialled an agreement on Russian payments for leasing the test ranges. According to reports, the Russian Defence Ministry is to pay \$US 28 million a year. \$3 million of this will be, another \$4 million will cover training of 1,000 Kazakh personnel a year at Russian higher military schools, and the rest would comprise supplies of weapons and materiel. Another agreement set out conditions for storing and transporting highly toxic missile fuel and other compounds from the Sary Shagan test site. The latter two agreements were to be submitted for review at governmental level in both states. Sergeyev claimed that the visit had accomplished everything it was meant to, but this appears an overstatement, given the real results of the negotiations. Even where agreements were reached, progress was very qualified. Four more aircraft (in addition to 41 already supplied) fell far short of the 73 that Russia had promised to Kazakhstan. No firm agreement was reached on the transfer of two mine-sweepers and two gunboats, which Altynbayev said might take part in joint patrols of the two states' national sectors in the Caspian Sea, adding that "this is in the interests of both Russia and Kazakhstan,". But Sergeyev confined himself to a general statement that Russia would "seek possibilities" to transfer the boats. Russian reluctance to proceed with the deal was presumably due to disagreement on the status of the Caspian Sea.<sup>210</sup>

Fulfilment of the agreement on rent payments for the test ranges remained conditioned on the Russian Duma's attitude, which was far from positive given Russian-Kazakh disagreements on the status of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan. The Duma is unlikely to abandon its previous practice of blocking allocation of funds for the test ranges and Baykonur, and the budget for the current financial year did not include funds for them. This was probably why Sergeyev told journalists that Russia might be prepared to reduce the size of the test sites.<sup>211</sup> Besides the situation around Baykonur again deteriorated when on 24 November 1997 Kazakhstan's parliamentary international affairs, defence and security committee rejected the draft law on the status of the cosmodrome, on the grounds that it discriminated against Kazakhstan. The head of the customs service, G.Kasymov, strongly objected to the draft law, saying that it did not specify whether Kazakh law was effective on the site. Senator Engels Gabbasov said Russia had launched foreign commercial satellites from Baykonur, in breach of the agreement. A.Kalybayev, Head of the Kazakh National Aerospace Agency, said Russia had paid none of the \$US 115 million fee for the lease. The committee also said that the draft law said nothing about ecology, law-enforcement or customs services.<sup>212</sup>

<sup>210</sup> The analysis of Russian-Kazakh disagreements on the status of the Caspian Sea is given in Chapter 6.

<sup>211</sup> Russia's Sergeyev to Discuss Cooperation with Kazakhstan, ITAR-TASS World Service, 28.10.97; Russia, Kazakhstan Sign Military Cooperation Accords, ITAR-TASS World Service, 30.10.97; Reuters News Service, 30.10.97; *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 31.10.97.

<sup>212</sup> Parliament Committee Questions Space Site Lease, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 27.11.97.

The new difficulties over Baykonur's status prompted Russia to speed up its military disengagement from there. On 17 December 1997 Yeltsin issued a decree instructing the government "to approve, within two months, plans for handing over facilities of the Baykonur cosmodrome from the Defence Ministry to the Russian Space Agency". The decree provided for setting up a state enterprise, Baykonur Federal Space Centre, to take over and operate the cosmodrome's facilities. The Defence Ministry would gradually reduce its personnel there, and hand over the facilities in 1998. 755 Russian military officers would stay, but would be seconded to and paid by the RSA.<sup>213</sup>

Kazakhstan continued expanding its military ties with the USA. During Nazarbayev's visit to Washington on 17-18 November 1997, he concluded a number of agreements on military matters. They included a Defence Cooperation Agreement which outlined plans for high level visits, additional progress on cooperative threat reduction and defence conversion, and US assistance in professionalising the Kazakh military, with particular emphasis on English language instruction, and training for a non-commissioned officer corps. The sides also signed a Program of Military Contacts for 1998 which called for more than 40 events and exchanges. As Secretary of Defence Cohen noted at the signing ceremony, US and Kazakhstan were "currently working both bilaterally and through the Partnership for Peace program to build new structures for regional stability in Central Asia".<sup>214</sup> This was clearly a challenge to the Russian-sponsored Tashkent Treaty security system.

Thus despite all the military agreements concluded between Russia and Kazakhstan, they failed to resolve the major problems in their military relations. Differences over cooperation with NATO, on the principles of a collective security system for Central Asia, the scale of the Russian military presence in Kazakhstan, and unresolved military-related financial matters remain significant stumbling blocks in the way of military cooperation between them. These problems will remain high on the agenda of bilateral relations, and to a large degree affect those relations, for some years to come.

<sup>213</sup> Baykonur Cosmodrome to Be Run by Civilian Authorities, ITAR-TASS World Service, 18.12.97

<sup>214</sup> Transcript: Cohen, Nazarbayev at Signing Ceremony, File ID:97111809.GWE, USIA Database, 18.11.97.

## CHAPTER 5

### RUSSIA AND INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION FOR KAZAKHSTAN'S ENERGY RESOURCES

After the collapse of the USSR Kazakhstan's energy resources became an area of vigorous diplomatic struggle between major world powers, including Russia. In the new geostrategic situation both the economic and the political importance of these resources in Russia's CIS strategy increased substantially. Initially Russian policy was motivated by immediate economic concerns, but later, with identification of Russia's new national interests, geopolitical considerations moved to the fore. At first sight Russian economic interest in Kazakhstan's energy resources seemed unnecessary. Russia's own energy reserves were several times those of Kazakhstan. According to 1991 assessments, Russia possessed 86% of the former USSR's proven oil and gas, and 70% of its coal reserves, versus Kazakhstan's 14%, 2% and 12% respectively.<sup>1</sup> In 1992 Kazakhstan's oil output was only 5.56% of Russia's.

But the Russian oil industry had been experiencing difficulties for some time, due to lack of investment and deteriorating infrastructure. Russian crude oil output had been shrinking steadily for years, but the most dramatic fall occurred in 1992. The Russian Ministry for Fuel and Power Engineering spotted the unfavourable trend as early as April, and warned that oil production in 1992 would be 360 million tonnes, 90 million tonnes less than in 1991.<sup>2</sup> The gravity of the problem was revealed at a government conference in the Kremlin on 30 May 1992, devoted to improving the performance of the Russian oil and gas complex. Yeltsin, who chaired the meeting, expressed serious concern over the unprecedented fall in oil and gas production. The conference promulgated a set of measures to revitalise the industry, including developing new oil and gas fields and encouraging foreign investments.<sup>3</sup> Thus in 1992 Russia's immediate concern was to stabilise its own oil and gas production.

Russia's enormous gas reserves ensured that it could supply its domestic and foreign markets for many years to come.<sup>4</sup> The situation regarding proven oil reserves was less good, but it would be a long time before they fell too low to meet domestic demand. A 1993 estimate by the Minister for Fuel and Power

<sup>1</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiey E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, pp. 10, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Russian Oil Production Set to Fall by 90 Million Tonnes in 1992, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 01.05.92. Actual drop in oil production in 1992 was a bit less than predicted. It fell from 460 to 395 million tonnes [Reuters News Service, 22.01.93]. Obviously active rescue measures, undertaken by the Russian government helped reduce the damage.

<sup>3</sup> Yeltsin and Government Discuss Oil and Gas: Deputy Premier Replaced, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 01.06.92.

<sup>4</sup> Russia accounts for 34.5% of the world's gas reserves.



Engineering indicated that domestic demand, at 240 million tonnes per year,<sup>5</sup> was well below annual output. But Moscow had had an interest since Brezhnev's time in maintaining high levels of oil and gas exports, which had provided an easy way of earning much needed foreign currency and postponing the urgent task of technological modernisation. The new Yeltsin regime looked at the oil and gas industry from the same perspective, but now required oil and gas exports to finance the costly social and economic transformation of Russian society towards capitalism. Maintaining production and exports became especially important for the regime's political survival. For Russia the problem was not a lack of energy resources, but of capital for extracting and exporting them.

Nazarbayev's regime had a similar agenda. In his strategy of nation-state building, independence had the highest priority. After the collapse of the USSR, the Kazakh leadership had no illusions about the real level of independence it had achieved. In an interview to Kazakh TV on the first anniversary of independence, Nazarbayev was quite frank about this: "So far we have not reached real independence... To achieve independence, the economy must be independent. To have an independent economy, we will have to face many future problems, because we will have to change the economic structure itself".<sup>6</sup> Nazarbayev's government turned to the energy sector as the major lever for economic restructuring, industrial modernisation and political survival. Kazakhstan's known oil and gas reserves, though smaller than Russia's, were large relative to its population, and it had regularly held second place in oil and gas production in the former USSR. At the beginning of 1993 its proven energy reserves were 2.21 billion tons of oil, 0.69 billion tons of gas condensate and 2.49 trillion cubic meters (m<sup>3</sup>) of natural gas, or 2% of the world's proven oil and gas deposits. Estimated reserves looked even more substantial - 8 billion tons of oil, and 5 trillion m<sup>3</sup> of gas.<sup>7</sup>

Almaty based its strategy on the premise that achievement of full economic independence should start with energy independence. A report on Kazakhstan's economic security, prepared in 1994 by Sh.Zhaksibekova, a Research Fellow at the Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies, identified "formation of the policy of economic independence" as the major objective, and pointed at Kazakhstan's "vast energy resources" as the basis for securing such independence, by "providing sufficient financial means for reorientation of the entire economy". It said that "expansion of oil production and growing revenue from exports open great possibilities for financing requirements for imported products and technologies, and for sustaining new investments", and concluded that "If Kazakhstan cannot acquire appropriate power and potential in the immediate future, it will risk being drawn into the gravitational orbit of its stronger neighbours (China and Russia),

<sup>5</sup> Intergovernmental Council on Oil and Gas Established, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 05.03.93.

<sup>6</sup> Nazarbayev on Kazakh TV: Talks about Economy, Religion, Nationality Mix, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 18.12.92.

<sup>7</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiei E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, pp. 73-74.

becoming a satellite of their economies, and losing real economic and political independence".<sup>8</sup>

The Kazakh leadership shared this view. Deputy Prime Minister Isingarín explained in an interview that Almaty "gives priority to development of pipeline transport, primarily directed towards export, because this will determine the future flow of investments and credits into Kazakhstan's oil and gas industry, and that will predetermine economic development... The objective is to abolish the economy's current excessive dependence on supplies of energy resources from neighbouring states".<sup>9</sup> Official pronouncements to this effect had begun to be voiced much earlier. In late September 1992, during a working tour of East Kazakhstan, Prime Minister Tereshchenko had said "We extract our own oil, but are forced to import petrol from Russia. This dependence must end".<sup>10</sup>

At first sight, to speak of Kazakhstan's "energy dependence" looked strange, given its large oil and gas deposits. Nevertheless, Kazakhstan's energy dependence on Russia was a fact of life, mainly because of the structure of its oil and gas complex inherited from Soviet times. The distribution of major industrial enterprises in the USSR was based on a single economic space, and ignored inter-republican borders. As a result Kazakhstan's two major refineries, Pavlodar in the north-east and Shymkent in the south-east, were far from the main oil and gas deposits in Kazakhstan. They processed West Siberian crude, delivered via the Omsk-Pavlodar-Shymkent pipeline, and had no pipeline connection to the West Kazakhstan fields.

Western Kazakhstan had only one refinery, in Atirau (Guryev), capable of processing just over 4 million tonnes of crude per year,<sup>11</sup> only a fraction of Kazakhstan's annual oil production of more than 20 million tonnes, 15 million of which came from West Kazakhstan.<sup>12</sup> The rest was pumped via the Uzen-Samara pipeline to refineries in Russia's Volga region. Before the USSR's collapse, Kazakhstan's three refineries processed about 18 million tonnes of crude a year, almost equal to its domestic demand of 20 million tonnes. But locally-produced crude provided less than 30% of the feedstock.<sup>13</sup> As a result Kazakhstan found itself very unfavourably placed after independence.

For example, in 1994 Kazakhstan exported 8.14 million tonnes of oil to Russia, and imported 8.87 million tonnes from it. But the price correlation was very unfavourable. Russia charged Kazakhstan \$382.49 million, an average of \$43.12 a tonne, for its oil, but paid only \$239.04 million, an average of \$29.37 a tonne, for Kazakhstan's oil.<sup>14</sup> This was very disadvantageous for Kazakhstan, but

<sup>8</sup> Zhaksibekova, Sh., *Fakty povysheniya ekonomicheskoy bezopasnosti Kazakhstana (analiticheskiy doklad)*, Almaty: KISI, 1994, p. 5, 10-12.

<sup>9</sup> *Kazakhstan budet rasshiryat' svoe prisutstvie na mirovom rynke (intervyu s pervym zamestitel'm Premier Ministra Respubliki Kazakhstan Isingarinom N.K.)* // *Politika* (Almaty), No.4, 1996, pp. 15-16.

<sup>10</sup> *Izvestiya*, 23.09.92.

<sup>11</sup> Auken, B., Julamanov, R., *Neft' i gaz Kazakhstana (ekonomicheskii obzor)*, Almaty: IRK, 1995, pp. 4-5.

<sup>12</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 17.10.96.

<sup>13</sup> *Petroleum Economist*, July 1995, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Ministerstvo Ekonomiki Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Spravka o postavkakh vazhneyshikh vidov produktsii mezhdru Rossiyskoy Federatsiei i Respublikoy Kazakhstan v 1994 godu*, Moscow [No publisher] 04.04.95.

it could do nothing about it, as it was dependent on Russian oil, whereas Russia was not dependent on Kazakhstan oil, and could buy or not as it saw fit. From 1991 to 1994 there was a decline in the volume of oil processed annually by 56% at Pavlodar and 41% at Shymkent, while Atirau's output remained at the 1991 level.<sup>15</sup>

A similar situation existed with Kazakhstan's gas production, also concentrated in Western Kazakhstan and oriented towards exports to Russia. Russia had no dependence on Kazakhstan's gas, while Kazakhstan could meet its domestic demand of 15 billion m<sup>3</sup> a year only by importing gas from Russia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.<sup>16</sup> E. Azerbaev, President of the state gas company "Kazakhgaz", complained that Orenburg gas processing plant would pay only "a lower than dumping price" for gas and condensate from the Karachaganak field.<sup>17</sup> From 1992 to 1994 Kazakhstan's gas production fell from 7.56 billion m<sup>3</sup> to 4.05 billion, and gas exports from 5.1 billion m<sup>3</sup> to 1.49 billion.<sup>18</sup>

The Kazakh leadership was uncomfortably aware of its weak energy position, and devised various plans to eliminate its dependence. One such contemplated building a pipeline from Atirau via the Kenkiyak and Kumkol oilfields to join the Pavlodar-Shymkent line. Technical and economic surveys assessed the pipeline's length as 1195 km, annual capacity as 23 million tonnes, and cost as \$1.1 billion.<sup>19</sup> For gas transportation, the Kazakh leadership envisaged building a pipeline from the Karachaganak oil and gas field via Aksay and Aktyubinsk to Krasnyy Oktyabr', with subsequent north-eastward extension via Kustanay and Kokchetau to Akmola.<sup>20</sup> In addition, a small (400,000 tonnes a year) refining unit was planned for the Karachaganak gas and condensate deposit.<sup>21</sup> Kazakhstan had only two potential sources of capital for these pipelines, its own oil and gas exports or foreign investment.

Kazakhstan began actively seeking foreign investment in its oil and gas industry very soon after independence. In April 1992 the French state-controlled oil company, Elf Aquitaine, concluded a deal to explore for oil in Atirau province. In May 1992, during Nazarbayev's visit to the USA, a contract was signed with Chevron Oil to develop the Tengiz oil field. In July 1992 British Gas and the Italian state oil company Agip bid successfully to exploit the Karachaganak oil and gas field.<sup>22</sup> The Kazakh leadership was evidently heartened by these developments,

<sup>15</sup> Petroleum Economist, July 1995, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Reuters News Service, 02.11.92.

<sup>17</sup> Azerbaev, E., V edinstve nasha sila // Evraziya: narody, kultura, religii, No.1(3), 1995, p. 25.

<sup>18</sup> Petroleum Economist, January 1996, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> Kabildin, K., Lobaev, A., Rakhmetova, K., Neft' Kazakhstana v tsentral'noaziatskom, rossiyskom i mirovom kontekste // Kazakhstan i mirovye soobshchestvo, No.3(4), 1995, p. 14.

<sup>20</sup> Kazakhstan budet rasshiryat' svoe prisutstvie na mirovom rynke (intervyu s pervym zamestitel'm Premier Ministra Respubliki Kazakhstan Isingarimov N.K.) // Politika (Almaty), No.4, 1996, p. 16.

<sup>21</sup> Petroleum Economist, July 1995, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Tengiz oil field is situated in the very north-west of Mangistau province on the Caspian Sea coast. Discovered in 1970, it is one of the five biggest fields in the world. Its oil reserves are estimated at 500-800 million tonnes. Karachaganak oil and gas field is situated in the north-east of West Kazakhstan province. Discovered in 1979, its reserves are estimated at 200 million tonnes of oil, 650 million tonnes of gas condensate and 1.3 trillion cubic

because in November 1992 N.Bekbosynov, First Deputy Energy Minister, announced a long-term program forecasting a rise in oil and gas output to 33.5 million tonnes and 16.1 billion m<sup>3</sup> by 1995, and 42 million tonnes and 22 billion m<sup>3</sup> by 2000. He stressed that Karachaganak and other deposits being developed should increase Kazakhstan's natural gas resources by 2.4 times by 2000, enabling gas imports to be reduced by a similar proportion.<sup>23</sup> Addressing a conference on Kazakhstan's energy resources in Almaty on 6 October 1993, Baykenov, Minister of Power Engineering and Fuel, said that the national program for developing the oil and gas industry would make Kazakhstan self-sufficient in energy within three to four years.<sup>24</sup>

Kazakhstan's energy policy rested on maximising involvement by Western companies in its oil and gas sector. In his address to the nation in October 1997 Nazarbayev justified it as follows: "Major companies and money from the USA, Russia, China, Britain and other leading states will be involved in development of the Caspian shelf and the Karachaganak field. This will increase the leading powers' interest in our independence".<sup>25</sup> The mention of Russia as only one among several equals was meant to stress that it would have no predominant influence in its former domain. Thus besides raising funds to modernise Kazakhstan's energy infrastructure and production base, Nazarbayev had a political objective, to involve the major powers in competition for access to Kazakhstan's energy resources, thereby achieving *de facto* independence from Russia without falling into dependency on any other country.

Nazarbayev's plans were definitely at odds with Russia's strategic line of stabilising its own oil industry. Competition with Kazakhstan for foreign investment in the energy sector weakened Moscow's bargaining position vis-a-vis Western companies, limited its choice of potential investors, and potentially threatened prices in the traditional and new markets the Russian oil and gas industry sought to penetrate. Moscow began seeking ways to put the brakes on Kazakhstan's unrestrained cooperation with foreign investors. Its biggest lever was the fact that all the pipelines between Kazakhstan and its potential foreign markets ran through Russian territory, and it was prepared to use its control to enforce its own energy policy within the CIS.

The Kazakh leadership well understood their geographical disadvantage, and made every effort to secure Moscow's cooperation in ensuring transit for Kazakhstan's oil and gas exports through Russia's pipelines. Moscow could not openly reject Kazakhstan's approaches, because to do so could harm relations not only with Almaty but with major Western oil companies which were actual or potential investors in Russia, and had the ear of their respective governments. Thus in enforcing its energy policy towards Kazakhstan, Russia had to tread delicately.

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meters of natural gas. Both fields are difficult to exploit because of their depth - 4-5.5 km. [Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiei E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, p. 75-76].

<sup>23</sup> Reuters News Service, 02.11.92.

<sup>24</sup> International Oil and Gas Conference Opens in Alma-Ata, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 15.10.93.

<sup>25</sup> Nazarbayev, N., Kazakhstan - 2030: protsvetanie, bezopasnost' i uluchshenie blagosostoyaniya kazakhstantsev, Poslanie Prezidenta strany narodu Kazakhstana // Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 11.10.97, p. 29.

The above considerations may be the clue to the essence of the game started by Moscow with the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), which has become the major mystery in the web of intrigues surrounding the pipeline issue. In the centre of the controversy was the Oman Oil Company (OOC) owned by the government of Oman, but managed by "Transworld Oil Ltd", based in Houston, Texas.<sup>26</sup> The intrigue started to unfold in May 1992, when immediately after the signing of the deal with Chevron Tereshchenko, then Kazakhstan's Prime Minister, and Chernomyrdin, then Russia's Minister of the Oil and Gas Industry, went to Bermuda. Their visit resulted in a deal with the OOC to form what is now known as the CPC.<sup>27</sup> Everything in this deal looked suspicious, the place where it was concluded, the choice of partner, and the personality of John Deuss, President of "Transworld Oil Ltd".

John Deuss, a Dutch oil trader, was rumoured to be the originator of the CPC project. He allegedly promised the Kazakhs much investment, and political support from Washington, and in return demanded many things almost free of charge, including a one-third share in the CPC project.<sup>28</sup> His business reputation was far from perfect. In the 1970s and 1980s he was allegedly involved in shipping oil to South Africa in contravention of UN sanctions.<sup>29</sup> He was well and unfavourably known to Russian oil exporters. In 1978 the Soviet oil export agency Soyuznefteexport filed a complaint against Deuss and his company JOC Oil, alleging he had defrauded it of more than \$100 million by not paying for oil delivered in 1976 and 1977. A protracted legal battle ensued. The contract between the two companies was ruled invalid, on the technicality that only one official of Soyuznefteexport had signed it, whereas Soviet law mandated two official signatories for contracts with foreign firms. The contract did, however, contain an arbitration clause which stated disputes would be settled by a Moscow tribunal. The tribunal subsequently ordered JOC to pay approximately \$100 million for the oil, and a further \$100 million in costs and profits from its sales of the oil. In 1989 a Bermuda appeal court upheld the ruling.<sup>30</sup> Some later publications in the Russian press termed Deuss "an international swindler with a scandalous reputation", who "would hardly promote the undertaking's success".<sup>31</sup> The Russian decision to deal with Deuss again seemed strange, except that if they were planning something tricky, Deuss might be the right person for them.

On 15 June 1992 Tereshchenko left for Oman, for talks on cooperation in joint prospecting, extracting and transporting oil in Western Kazakhstan.<sup>32</sup> What exactly Tereshchenko discussed in Oman is unknown, but the likelihood that CPC was the main issue is very high, because two days after the visit the CPC was

<sup>26</sup> In 1991, when Kazakhstan was still a part of the USSR, OOC assisted the republic's government in working out the Tengiz agreement [Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 11.07.97].

<sup>27</sup> Nezavisimaya gazeta, 30.11.95.

<sup>28</sup> APS Review Gas Market Trends, 15.07.96.

<sup>29</sup> Times, 28.04.96.

<sup>30</sup> Euromoney, January 1994, p. 89.

<sup>31</sup> Nezavisimaya gazeta, 30.11.95.

<sup>32</sup> Kazakh Premier Leaves for Oman, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 18.06.92.

formally launched, initially by Kazakhstan and the OOC. Within three months, Oman extended a \$US 100 million credit to Kazakhstan, allegedly to be used for "improvement of oil and gas extraction".<sup>33</sup> In practice no noticeable upgrading of Kazakhstan's energy sector took place; in fact its situation continued to deteriorate.

On 22 June CPC signed a memorandum of understanding with Chevron, detailing Chevron's desire for preferential access to the pipeline to transport oil from Tengiz. The memorandum did not impose any formal obligations on Chevron, but gave CPC the aura of the only pipeline partner that Chevron would have to deal with in the future. Russia joined the consortium, after some token delay, on 24 July 1992, obviously to prevent possible future accusations that it had dragged Kazakhstan into the venture. Each CPC member had an equal interest in the consortium, which was to be registered as a limited liability company incorporated in Bermuda. The original plan envisaged that the pipeline would take three years to build, and cost between \$700 million and \$1.5 billion, depending on the route chosen.<sup>34</sup>

On 24 October 1992 CPC announced its plans to build an oil pipeline to link Tengiz and Baku (in Azerbaijan) with the Russian deep-water port of Novorossiysk. Other options, including routes through Azerbaijan and Iran to the Persian Gulf, and through Turkey to the Mediterranean, had been discarded. The cost of the project was given as about \$850 million. The existing pipeline from Atirau via Astrakhan to the refinery at Grozny (Chechnya) was to serve as basis for the new pipeline. This involved building a new 750-kilometre, 42-inch pipeline, and expanding Novorossiysk port with new terminal and storage facilities. The pipeline's capacity would initially be 300,000 barrels a day, but capable of increase to 1.5 million. The project also envisaged modernising the existing Grozny-Baku oil pipeline<sup>35</sup>

In December 1992 Chernomyrdin was appointed Prime Minister, which substantially strengthened the oil and gas lobby's position with the Russian government. In exchange for cooperation in CPC, Moscow demanded a share in the exploitation of Kazakhstan's energy resources. Immediately after his appointment Chernomyrdin went to Almaty, where he and Tereshchenko signed an agreement "On Cooperation in the Industries of the Fuel and Energy Complexes" (24 December 1992). It was designed to secure Russian involvement in prospecting Kazakhstan's energy resources, and said that the sides would "maintain existing business ties in conducting survey, exploration and prospecting drilling for oil and gas". Kazakhstan gave the right to drill on its territory to the Russian company "Prikspiyburneft". The signatories promised to assist in concluding contracts between each other's firms to drill on their territories. (Article

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<sup>33</sup> Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 05.09.97.

<sup>34</sup> Reuters News Service, 24.07.92.

<sup>35</sup> Caspian Oil Consortium Announces Pipeline Construction Plans, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 30.10.92.

6), thereby preserving Russian access to Kazakhstan's oil and gas deposits. Other similar provisions were contained in Articles 7 and 13. They stipulated that the sides would continue to cooperate and maintain existing business ties in constructing main pipelines for transporting oil, gas and oil products, and in preparing oil and gas fields for commercial production. While this last point mainly suited Russia, interested in maintaining its access to Kazakhstan's energy resources, the first obviously favoured Kazakhstan, since Almaty knew that it would need use of Russian territory for connecting its oil and gas fields to world markets.

Kazakhstan received other concessions from Moscow. Article 3 of the agreement provided that the sides would "secure mutual deliveries of the most important fuel and energy resources in 1993", to be made on the basis of contracts between each other's companies, and at Russian domestic market prices, considerably lower than world market prices, thus guaranteeing Kazakhstan cheap oil and gas. On the other hand, Russia avoided specifying how much oil and gas it would purchase from Kazakhstan, or how much it would pay for them. The signatories also promised to ensure "unhampered transportation" of each other's fuel and energy products through each other's territory, including those destined for export "in volumes established by Russian-Kazakh agreements, as well as agreements with third countries". Here Moscow met Kazakhstan halfway, retaining for itself the right to decide how much oil Kazakhstan would be allowed to sell on foreign markets.

Of particular importance for Russia was Article 16, which stipulated establishment of a working group on "creating a coordinating body for interaction of the oil and gas extracting industries".<sup>36</sup> Behind it was Moscow's desire to draw Kazakhstan into a multilateral arrangement within the CIS, which would limit Almaty's freedom of manoeuvre in attracting foreign investors into its energy sector and exporting its own oil and gas. This clearly ran contrary to the Kazakh leadership's strategic plans, but with the launching of CPC Almaty had every reason to feel optimistic, and did not want to vex Moscow by refusing to cooperate. Consequently Nazarbayev initially endorsed the Russian proposal. At the International Congress of Industrialists and entrepreneurs on 26 January 1993 he mentioned that a conference of the ministries of CIS states responsible for oil and gas would be held soon in Tyumen province, a major Russian oil producing region, and that a "mini-OPEC" would be formed in the immediate future within CIS.<sup>37</sup> He said "Kazakhstan is ready to take part in such a 'mini-OPEC'"<sup>38</sup>

The meeting in Surgut, Tyumen province, took place on 2 March, and was attended by the heads of government of all former Soviet republics except Latvia, Estonia and Turkmenistan. The participants signed an agreement to create new

<sup>36</sup> *Soglashenie mezhdru Pravitel'stvom Respubliki Kazakhstan i Pravitel'stvom Rossiyskoy Federatsii o sotrudnichestve v otraslyakh toplivno-energeticheskikh kompleksov* // *Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 122-126.

<sup>37</sup> "Izvestiya" and "Pravda" comment on Alma-Ata Industrialists Congress, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 30.01.93.

<sup>38</sup> Reuters News Service, 19.12.92.

mechanisms to halt Russia's collapsing oil production and ensure adequate fuel supplies to areas suffering shortages. It provided for setting up an inter-governmental council on oil and gas, tasked to unite the republics' forces in the areas of investment, scientific, technological and other forms of cooperation, and to devise a common policy to promote stability and development in the oil and gas sectors. The highest body of the inter-governmental council would be the conference of heads of state, to be held at least twice a year. The council's executive body would be the council of ministers and heads of national fuel and energy administrations. The council of ministers would meet at least once per quarter. Tyumen, Siberia's oil capital, was chosen as the council secretariat's headquarters.

Shafranik, Russia's Minister for Fuel and Power Engineering, reportedly said the agreement would lay the foundation for restoring Russia's coordinating role in the fuel and energy complex, and, in an interview, that Russia would like to receive shares in oil extracting and processing enterprises in other member states, and was ready to offer its partners shares in its own enterprises. Kazakhstan also welcomed the agreement. According to Tereshchenko, in Surgut "at least everybody finally understood that the oil problem should be resolved together".<sup>39</sup> However, later events showed that the agreement remained on paper. Kazakhstan had no intention of fulfilling it.

On 13 February 1993 the Kazakhstankaspiyshelf State Company was formed, for the purpose of exploring for oil and gas in the Kazakh zone of the Caspian shelf. On 22 April, while in Washington, K.Baikenov, Kazakhstan's Minister of Energy and Fuel Resources, told reporters that by September the country planned to form a consortium with up to ten Western oil companies, to study development of oil and gas deposits under the Caspian Sea. He said the study should take about three years, and that companies joining the consortium would be given priority in obtaining licenses to extract the oil.<sup>40</sup> Russian companies were not invited to participate in the project, so would not get this "priority".

On 6 April 1993 Almaty signed an agreement with Chevron, establishing a joint company, Tengizchevroil.<sup>41</sup> Initial plans for Tengiz development assumed production and export of 3 million tonnes of crude in 1993-94, to double by 1995, and reach its maximum capacity of 30 million tonnes a year by 2010. The project's cost was assessed at \$20 billion, and its duration as 40 years. Kazakhstan and Chevron each held a 50% share, but the profits would be divided in the proportions 80.4% to Kazakhstan and 19.6% to Chevron.<sup>42</sup> Russia was neither consulted nor invited to participate.

<sup>39</sup> Reuters News Service, 02.03.93; Intergovernmental Council on Oil and Gas Established, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 05.03.93.

<sup>40</sup> Kazakhstan Seeks Western Investment to Produce Energy, USIA Database, File ID: ECO404, 22.04.93.

<sup>41</sup> Reuters News Service, 06.04.93.

<sup>42</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiey E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, pp. 75-76.



The first signs of Russian dissatisfaction with Kazakhstan's behaviour appeared in early February 1993, when the Russian pipeline monopoly Transneft demanded that Kazakhstan lower the level of mercaptan<sup>43</sup> in oil from Tengiz exported through Russian pipelines. Vinnichenko, Director of Transneft, warned that the Tengiz project's future would be in doubt if the mercaptan problem was not solved.<sup>44</sup> Meanwhile the Uzen-Samara pipeline, which was linked to the Druzhba export pipeline, was the only one Chevron could use for taking its oil out of Tengiz. The section leading to Samara had a capacity of around 10 million tonnes per year, more than enough to meet Chevron's initial demands. Tengizchevroil agreed with Russia on an export quota of 3 million tonnes for 1993. But problems were soon encountered. First, some mechanical constraints affected output and exports, and later the Russians simply refused to let Chevron put through as much crude as it wished. Chevron consequently managed to export only 0.98 million tonnes from Tengiz in 1993.<sup>45</sup> It was also faced with the prospect of having to build an expensive refinery complex at Tengiz.

The situation naturally affected Kazakhstan's overall oil exports, which fell substantially, instead of growing as predicted. In September 1993 Baykenov, Energy and Fuel Resources Minister, complained in an interview that Kazakhstan's oil production and exports were being hampered, because Russia was limiting access to its pipelines. He said that oil exports in 1993 would be one million tonnes less than in 1992, due to the mercaptan problem.<sup>46</sup> In fact, Kazakhstan exported 6.2 million tonnes of crude through Russia in 1993, only slightly down from 6.5 million in 1992.<sup>47</sup> But this was little consolation for Chevron, which remained a major loser. But Chevron did not try to find an accommodation with the Russians, seeking instead decided to play from a position of strength. Various projects for possible alternative pipelines routes from Kazakhstan, by-passing Russian territory, began to be actively discussed, and the pipeline issue soon became the major element in a diplomatic struggle involving leading world powers.

The decision to form CPC worried Turkey. After the USSR's collapse Ankara was making vigorous efforts to strengthen its position among the Turkic nations of Central Asia, including Kazakhstan. A major pipeline through Russia would perpetuate Kazakhstan's economic dependence on its northern neighbour, and deprive Turkey of an opportunity to exercise economic leverage on Central Asian politics. For Ankara the prospective route of an oil pipeline from Kazakhstan acquired not only economic but geopolitical importance. Turkey openly showed its dissatisfaction with the CPC decision at the summit of leaders of Turkic nations in Ankara on 31 October 1992. Opening the meeting, President Ozal suggested that

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<sup>43</sup> A highly corrosive sulphur derivative, which in high concentrations in oil can destroy pipelines and storage tanks.

<sup>44</sup> *Business Times* (Singapore), 08.02.93.

<sup>45</sup> *Petroleum Economist*, February 1994, p. 22.

<sup>46</sup> Reuters News Service, 17.09.93.

<sup>47</sup> Reuters News Service, 04.08.94.

pipelines be built to carry Azeri, Kazakh, Turfmen and Uzbek crude and gas to Turkey's Mediterranean coast, for further export to the West.<sup>48</sup>

In late February 1993 Turkey began a campaign to prevent any increase in the number of tankers passing through the Straits. It told the International Maritime Organisation that the risks of pollution and accidents were unacceptable, that it was not yet contemplating unilateral action, but that while traffic separation measures and traffic services might reduce congestion in the Oospores, they could not solve the problems which would follow a traffic increase.<sup>49</sup> The main thrust of the Turkish argument was clearly against oil and gas exports from Novorossiysk. Another Turkish move came on 9 March 1993, when it signed an agreement to build an oil pipeline from Azerbaijan to a Mediterranean terminal at Yumurtalik.<sup>50</sup> This was the first bid for an alternative to CPC, to which Kazakhstan could later be connected.

Turkey's actions well suited Chevron as a counter to Russian obstructionism over exporting Tengiz oil, and had a definite interest in the outcome of the growing Turkish-Russian dispute over oil transportation through the Bosphorus. Limitations on tanker traffic would make the economics of oil transportation from Novorossiysk less attractive, and thereby invalidate the economic rationale behind the Tengiz-Novorossiysk pipeline project, making alternative pipeline routes (including one through Turkey) more viable. After experiencing Russian pipeline obstructionism, Chevron would probably prefer a pipeline from Tengiz to run through some other country, desirably America's ally. Of course Turkey was acting in its own interests in pushing for a pipeline through its territory, but they coincided with Chevron's.

On 23 April 1993 Chevron announced that the arrangements within the CPC were unsatisfactory. Chevron Overseas Petroleum President Richard Matzke said, after a joint press conference with Kazakhstan's Energy Minister Baykenov, that plans to split the equity in the CPC among Russia, Kazakhstan and Oman, but giving oil companies no real equity in return for their investment, were unacceptable, and added that Chevron was also interested in other pipeline projects besides the CPC.<sup>51</sup> On 25 May Espy Price, Vice-President of Chevron Overseas Petroleum, told an oil conference in London that three pipeline projects were being considered, but none yet met Chevron's five investment criteria, and that there was "a great deal of uncertainty about how and where a pipeline would be constructed".<sup>52</sup> Turkey also used the London conference to issue a warning about the viability of channelling Kazakh crude to the Black Sea. Its Transport Minister,

<sup>48</sup> Middle East Economic Digest, 13.11.92.

<sup>49</sup> Lloyd's List, 24.02.93.

<sup>50</sup> Reuters News Service, 09.03.93.

<sup>51</sup> Reuters News Service, 23.04.93.

<sup>52</sup> The five criteria comprised: ownership equitable and in proportion to the cash contribution of each participant; risks and rewards shared in proportion to capital contribution; non-discriminatory access and tariffs for shippers; fair tariffs; and protection from political risks. [Reuters News Service, 25.05.93].

Yasar Topcu, said that increased tanker traffic through the Bosphorus would not be possible, for environmental and strategic reasons.<sup>53</sup>

It was evidently Turkey's actions that prompted Russia to reconsider its priorities with regard to Caspian energy resources, and geopolitical considerations then pushed economic ones into the background. Russia could not accept removal of former Soviet republics from its sphere of influence into that of Turkey, a traditional geopolitical rival. In April 1993 Yeltsin decreed formation of a large partially state-owned oil company LUKoil, through the merger of three "oil production associations".<sup>54</sup> It was assigned the task of "coordinating" Russian oil projects in the Caspian Sea basin,<sup>55</sup> which in practice meant penetrating the Western companies' various energy projects. In October 1993 LUKoil managed to obtain a 10% stake in the consortium led by British Petroleum to develop Azerbaijan's oil fields.<sup>56</sup> Entry into such projects by a Russian state-controlled company was clearly designed to preserve Moscow's economic and political influence in the region. Firstly, Russia would receive access to internal information in the joint ventures. Secondly, it would benefit from profits made by the project. Thirdly, it would participate in decision-making, theoretically with no decisive voice, but with substantial weight given by Moscow's backing.

Meanwhile the CPC project stalled for lack of funds. Kazakhstan counted on securing finance from international financial institutions. Baykenov, Minister for Energy and Fuel Resources, told reporters in Washington on 22 April 1993 that Kazakhstan would seek funding and assistance from the World Bank and Western official export credit agencies and oil companies.<sup>57</sup> According to some reports, CPC approached the World Bank for a loan. Publicly the bank said it hoped to process loans to Kazakhstan by 1995, but privately bank sources said it was not prepared to lend to the project, probably because of Deuss' involvement.<sup>58</sup> The bank's report of 8 April 1994 said its decision not to help fund the pipeline had put the consortium 'in crisis'.<sup>59</sup> Thus Deuss' personality started to have a direct negative effect on implementation of the project, an outcome expected and welcomed by Russia.

The chosen tactic was simple. Kazakhstan was drawn into a venture, implementation of which was constantly delayed for technical or financial reasons, thus hindering Kazakhstan's exports to western markets. At the same time involvement in the venture was distracting Kazakhstan from turning to alternative projects. Oman's role in the undertaking might be unclear at first sight, but was also quite explicable. The West was interested in diversifying sources of oil imports, to reduce its dependence on the Persian Gulf region. If it succeeded, the

<sup>53</sup> *Petroleum Economist*, July 1993, p. 38.

<sup>54</sup> *Izvestiya*, 06.06.95.

<sup>55</sup> *Economist*, 16.07.94.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>57</sup> *Kazakhstan Seeks Western Investment to Produce Energy*, USIA Database, File ID: ECO404, 22.04.93

<sup>58</sup> *Euromoney*, January 1994, p. 89.

<sup>59</sup> *Financial Times*, 17.05.94.

economic and political influence of the Persian Gulf states would be diminished. Probably Oman's involvement was encouraged by other major oil exporters to prevent such an outcome. In this Russia's and Oman's interests coincided.

Time was playing into Russia's hands. Kazakhstan was failing to accumulate funds to restructure its energy complex, and Chevron was losing money. By April 1995 Tengizchevroil's reported losses totalled \$10 million.<sup>60</sup> There was, however, one unfavourable development that interfered with Russia's plans, namely Turkey with its alternative pipeline projects. Turkey's entry into the game substantially raised the stakes in the diplomatic struggle around the pipeline issue. Russia undoubtedly had an advantage, because a pipeline through Russian territory would be shorter, could utilise the existing pipeline network, transit the territory of only one country, and that quite stable compared to others in the region, and hence would be more economically viable. But this was the case only if the pipeline's construction went ahead. If Kazakhstan saw nothing emerging from the CPC it could turn to alternative projects, including through Turkey. For example, speaking to financial analysts and industry executives on 17 February 1994, Nazarbayev said Kazakhstan was still considering various options for new export pipelines, but no decisions had as yet been taken. Besides the pipeline to Novorossiysk, other options could include a line via the Caspian, Baku and Turkey to the Mediterranean although, he said, it was a very complicated route, or through Turkmenistan and Iran to Turkey, or through Iran to the Persian Gulf.<sup>61</sup>

Ankara had one strong trump card, its control over the exit from the Black Sea, and intended to use it to the full. In early August 1993 Tefvik Okyayuz, a senior Turkish Foreign Ministry official, stated that Turkey would be forced to introduce some kind of quota system for the congested shipping lane if supertankers became common. "It is not possible for large amounts of oil to pass... We don't want to raise Montreux. But we are not afraid to challenge it". Moscow's reaction was at once voiced by its ambassador to Turkey, Chernyshev, who pointed out that the pipeline route favoured by Ankara was plagued by fighting in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey's Kurdish south-east. He said the Montreux Convention was vital to Russia, and small tankers could provide the best interim solution.<sup>62</sup>

But Turkey was undeterred. In January 1994 it announced new navigation rules for the Straits, effective from 1 July 1994, under which oil tankers must give 24 hour's notice before entering the Straits, must transit only one at a time, if over 150 metres long would be subject to new, more stringent, minimum visibility rules, and fined if they moved without permission. The potential effect of the new rules was clear - more time-consuming and perhaps more costly tanker traffic. In February Russia warned Turkey that the new rules could create tension.<sup>63</sup> But Turkey's position was strengthened by an accident in the Bosphorus on 14 March,

<sup>60</sup> Euromoney, May 1995, p. 16.

<sup>61</sup> Reuters News Service, 17.02.94.

<sup>62</sup> Independent, 10.08.93.

<sup>63</sup> Reuters News Service, 14.03.94, Reuters News Service, 07.07.94.

when the Cypriot tanker *Nassia* and Cypriot cargo ship *Ship Broker* collided in clear weather just before midnight. Turkish diplomacy capitalised on the accident to the utmost. "It's like having atom bombs passing every day through Istanbul, a city of 10 million people," said Environment Minister Rize Akcali, and vowed that Turkey would not flinch from implementing the new navigation rules.<sup>64</sup>

Due to Turkish pressure a special session of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) was convened in London on 25 May 1994. It was specifically devoted to drafting rules to improve the safety of ships passing through the Bosphorus, Sea of Marmara and Dardanelles. Russia had to endure a fierce diplomatic battle with Turkey, but by mobilising the support of other nations dependent on trade through the straits managed to block the most radical Turkish proposals. The measures adopted fell short of Turkey's initial demands. They included recommendations that all vessels entering the straits comply with the Turkish reporting system, use qualified pilots, and if over 200 metres long, pass through only in daylight. It also required ships to observe traffic separation schemes. The new rules were to come into effect on 24 November 1994.<sup>65</sup> The recommendations could help avoid the delays arising from Turkey's original plans, but on a longer-term basis the problem of transiting the Bosphorus looked set to continue. The Turkish authorities could suspend two-way traffic if a vessel was deemed unable to comply with the traffic separation scheme. There was little mention of criteria for judging this inability, and this could result in arbitrary bans on vessels.

Despite the IMO's recommendations, on 1 July 1994 Turkey went ahead with introducing its new rules. Moscow, naturally, protested that the new regulations went beyond ensuring safe navigation "by imposing unwarranted restrictions, up to and including the complete halting of navigation". This was interpreted as "direct violation" of the Montreux Convention and "other generally accepted norms of maritime law", and Russia "cannot recognise as lawful the introduction, in effect, of a procedure, requiring permission for passage through the straits, and imposing unilateral restrictions up to and including de facto prohibition of such passage for certain classes of ships. In conclusion the Russian memorandum expressed serious concern over the new regulations, asked Turkey to refrain from implementing them, and warned that Russian vessels passing through the straits would comply with only those provisions of the Turkish regulations that were not in conflict with international legal norms and decisions of specified international organisations.<sup>66</sup>

This protest, and Russia's declared refusal to obey the new rules, could not, however, remove the business uncertainty caused by the dispute over the Straits. Russia needed another measure to alleviate concern, and found it in a draft project for a pipeline from the Bulgarian Black Sea port of Bourgas to the Greek Mediterranean port of Alexandroupolis, bypassing the Straits. First reports of this

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<sup>64</sup> Independent, 15.03.94.

<sup>65</sup> Reuter News Service, 25.05.94.

<sup>66</sup> Nezavisimaya gazeta, 01.07.94.

plan appeared in June 1994. During negotiations in Moscow in late August 1994, Russia officially invited Bulgaria to take part in the new project and Bulgaria acquiesced.<sup>67</sup> In September 1994 Russia's Gazprom signed a protocol with a consortium of Greek companies to build an oil pipeline through Bulgaria and Greece, to be completed in three years, and to be able to pump 20-40 million tonnes of oil a year.<sup>68</sup> The agreement was most likely a ploy, at least from the Russian side, but it effectively neutralised Turkey's claims for a pipeline through its own territory, and re-established the validity of the CPC.

Russia's diplomatic duel with Turkey developed in the background of Moscow's push to penetrate the Tengiz project. On 25 December 1993, during Chernomyrdin's visit to Almaty, he and Tereshchenko signed an agreement "On Cooperation and Development of the Fuel and Energy Complexes", which to a large extent repeated the previous one, but also contained several new elements. The agreement contained an obligation "to facilitate creation of joint ventures" between each other's companies. The task of "conducting the transfer of respective packages of shares" was assigned to Kazakhstan's Ministry of Energy and Fuel Resources and Russia's Ministry of Fuel and Power Engineering. The signatories agreed to consult each other "when developing energy programs" and "bearing in mind strengthening integrative ties".<sup>69</sup>

In principle the agreement gave Russia legal grounds to demand an interest in Tengiz and other energy projects under way in Kazakhstan, and also to request consultations with Almaty on future projects. Not surprisingly, in January 1994 LUKoil started to press for a share of the Tengiz project.<sup>70</sup> In March this pressure intensified.<sup>71</sup> LUKoil received unequivocal backing from Fuel and Energy Minister Shafranik, who in early 1994 demanded a 10% stake for Russia in major oil and gas projects initially developed by the Soviet Union outside Russia's boundaries.<sup>72</sup> But the Kazakhs obviously did not see things his way. On 22 March 1994, shortly before his official visit to Moscow, Nazarbayev said Kazakhstan would not give Russia any equity in Tengiz or Karachaganak.<sup>73</sup> During his negotiations with Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin he maintained his refusal, and despite numerous declarations favouring increased integration, the documents agreed during his visit mentioned neither of the projects.

This outcome was hardly conducive to implementation of the CPC project, nor a strong move on Nazarbayev's part. At least that is how Kazakhstan's position was assessed in a World Bank report of 8 April 1994. It concluded that

<sup>67</sup> Reuters News Service, 27.08.94.

<sup>68</sup> Reuters News Service, 15.09.94.

<sup>69</sup> Soglasenie mezhdru Pravitel'stvom Respubliki Kazakhstan i Pravitel'stvom Rossiyskoy Federatsii o sotrudnichestve i razvitii toplivno-energeticheskikh kompleksov // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, p. 135.

<sup>70</sup> Financial Times, 21.01.94.

<sup>71</sup> Financial Times, 18.03.94.

<sup>72</sup> East European Markets, 18.08.95.

<sup>73</sup> Financial Times, 23.03.94.

Kazakhstan "has little choice" but to surrender some equity shares to Russia, because "without Russian cooperation on pipelines, Kazakhstan cannot attract the high levels of foreign investment needed to develop its oil and gas sector".<sup>74</sup> Probably encouraged by the World Bank findings, LUKoil's President Alekperov arrived unexpectedly in Almaty in May 1994 and demanded unsuccessfully that LUKoil be given the equivalent of \$1 billion in free equity in oil projects under way in Kazakhstan. Later LUKoil denied that it had asked for free equity, but Alekperov reiterated in an interview that LUKoil "is in a position to demand participation in all oil and gas projects in the region".<sup>75</sup> Meanwhile Chevron expressed "grave concern" at Almaty's and Moscow's inability to agree the terms of the CPC project, and said that until all pipeline issues were resolved, it "will be unable to finance development of the Tengiz deposit, because it is already making significant losses".<sup>76</sup>

As a result the Kazakhs' irritation with the CPC and Deuss increased. In late October 1994 Nazarbayev commented that Kazakhstan might support a plan for Chevron to take OOC's place in the consortium. But this trial balloon immediately met determined opposition from Russia. On 31 October 1994 a spokesman for the Russian Fuel and Power Engineering Ministry said that Russia "joined the Caspian Pipeline Consortium which was initiated by agreement between Kazakhstan and Oman", that "any drastic changes in the consortium are undesirable for successful implementation of the project", and that Russia supported an option whereby Chevron could join the consortium, provided it paid \$US 400 million to cover initial expenditure.<sup>77</sup> Moscow was well aware that this proposal was intrinsically unacceptable to Chevron, which had already rejected it as "unfair and inequitable".<sup>78</sup> Talks in Moscow on 10 November 1994 between Chevron's Chairman Kenneth Derr and Chernomyrdin failed to resolve the controversy. Moscow also rejected Chevron's request to reduce tariffs for transporting oil across Russian territory.<sup>79</sup>

On the other hand, given Kazakhstan's dissatisfaction, CPC could not just sit idle. Some ostensible progress over the pipeline was necessary. This led to announcement of new initiatives. On 19 January 1995 CPC said it would proceed to implement the first phase of the project, costing about \$300 million, by constructing a 250 km pipeline from the city of Kropotkin to a newly constructed marine terminal on the Black Sea coast north of Novorossiysk. Construction would begin by January 1996, and the pipeline would become operational by January 1997. The OOC agreed to provide all the equity and guarantee financing for this stage.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Financial Times, 17.05.94.

<sup>75</sup> Economist, 16.07.94.

<sup>76</sup> Segodnya, 01.04.94.

<sup>77</sup> Russia Against Changes to Kazakh Pipeline Deal - Fuel Ministry, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 11.11.94.

<sup>78</sup> Reuters News Service, 03.10.94.

<sup>79</sup> Reuters News Service, 10.11.94.

<sup>80</sup> Reuters News Service, 19.01.95.

In an attempt to alleviate Kazakhstan's concerns, the Russians invited Qays Abd al-Mun'im Zawawi, Omani Deputy Prime Minister responsible for financial and economic affairs, to Moscow. On 11 March he and Shafranik signed an agreement to begin the first phase of pipeline construction.<sup>81</sup> Kazakhstan joined the agreement, after some delay, on 14 March, notably only after the Omani government was reported to have confirmed its commitment to invest \$250-300 million in the first phase of the project, and guaranteed to provide a loan if international financial organisations refused to do so.<sup>82</sup> In mid-April the Kazakh government confirmed that it would go ahead with the transfer of assets to the CPC, reportedly after assurances by Shafranik that the CPC project was a priority for Russia, which would "support its speedy launching", and that work on the first phase of the pipeline would start "on 1 January 1996 at the latest".<sup>83</sup>

This upsurge in activity around CPC was the direct result of a US decision to play a more active role in Caspian energy policy. The new US line became clear when on 3 February 1995 State Department announced that the United States had notified several governments in the region that it would endorse construction of a pipeline through Turkey to carry oil from the Caspian region of Azerbaijan.<sup>84</sup> Thus for the first time the Americans openly challenged Russia's role in transporting energy resources from the Caspian, and this had direct repercussions for Kazakhstan, which could now count on more solid American support. In April 1995 US Ambassador Courtney told a ceremony marking Tengizchevroil's second anniversary: "In the decades to come, we believe Kazakhstan and the Caspian region will be one of the world's main sources of oil. We believe several pipelines will promote healthy competition in transport of oil".<sup>85</sup>

In late April 1995 US Energy Department Deputy Secretary White made a ten-day tour of Turkey, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and Russia, where he discussed the possibility of alternative pipelines from the Caspian region. After the trip, White told a news conference there were sufficient oil reserves to warrant two pipelines - one to the Mediterranean and the other to the Black Sea, and said "I think the most significant thing was that every country--Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Turkey--expressed support for a southern pipeline route that would give them access to the Mediterranean".<sup>86</sup> Only Russian First Deputy Minister of Fuel and Power Engineering Anatoliy Fomin, had expressed doubts, telling White that "construction of two pipelines would be unwise for this area, because its oil resources are not large enough".<sup>87</sup>

It was not clear whether at that stage American actions were motivated simply by an attempt to help their major oil companies in negotiations with the

<sup>81</sup> Russia and Oman Sign Caspian Pipeline Agreement, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 14.03.95.

<sup>82</sup> Kazakhstan Joins Caspian Oil Pipeline Accord, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 24.03.95.

<sup>83</sup> Kazakhstan Overcomes Reservations about Pipeline Project, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 21.04.95.

<sup>84</sup> State Department Report, Friday, February 3, File ID:POL504, USIA Database, 03.02.97.

<sup>85</sup> Reuters News Service, 10.04.95.

<sup>86</sup> Reuters News Service, 26.04.93.

<sup>87</sup> USA Does Not Rule out Two Pipelines to Carry Caspian Oil, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 28.04.95.



recalcitrant CPC, or already reflected an emerging US strategy for the Caspian region. The former seems more likely, given the substance of White's talks in Moscow. Discussing the oil transportation issue with top Russian pipeline and government officials, White suggested that pumping capacity on the existing pipeline from Kazakhstan through Russia be increased to as much as 260,000 barrels per day by January 1997. He said the Americans were waiting for Russia's response.<sup>88</sup>

American's active support for multiple pipelines encouraged Kazakhstan to put pressure on CPC. On 6 April 1995 Prime Minister Kazhegeldin told a news conference in Almaty that he was not sure the CPC pipeline project alone would be sufficient, and that Kazakhstan could in future be forced to look for other options.<sup>89</sup> In May 1995 Kazakhstan signed a protocol of intent with Iran on building a pipeline from Tengiz to Aktau, for onward transportation by tankers to the Iranian Caspian Sea port of Anzali. The plan envisaged supplying up to 2 million tonnes of Kazakh oil annually to Iranian refineries in Tehran, Tabriz, Arak and Isfahan, with Iran releasing an equivalent amount of oil at its Persian Gulf terminals for export to world markets.<sup>90</sup> On 13 June 1996 Nazarbayev and Demirel signed an agreement to push ahead with a pipeline project through Turkey. Nazarbayev told a joint news conference that a consortium would have to be formed to implement the plan, and partial financing could come from international lending agencies.<sup>91</sup> This was followed by the signing on 15 August 1995 of a letter of intent between the heads of the Kazakh Oil and Gas Ministry and the Turkish Energy Ministry, providing for establishing an international corporation to build the pipeline, and a joint venture company to make feasibility studies.<sup>92</sup> The stakes in the oil gamble were apparently rising.

But Kazakh officials who applied that sort of diplomatic pressure obviously overplayed their hand. Moscow was well aware of the problems alternative oil and gas routes would incur. The pipeline through Turkey would be much longer than the Russian one, require much more capital investment, and pass through several states, each charging for transit. There was no guarantee that the total charged would be less than Russia's tariff. Of course, small states such as Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan could be more easily coerced than Russia into lowering tariffs. But they would be hard put to provide for the pipeline's security, especially given the political instability and ethnic conflicts in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkish Kurdistan. The Iranian route had its advantages, but was politically unacceptable for American oil companies, given the enmity in American-Iranian relations and the US government-imposed trade embargo on Iran.<sup>93</sup> Besides, Iran, like Russia, was a major oil producer, with no interest in increasing competition on the world oil

<sup>88</sup> Reuters News Service, 26.04.93.

<sup>89</sup> Kazakhstan Overcomes Reservations about Pipeline Project, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 21.04.95.

<sup>90</sup> Reuters News Service, 10.05.95.

<sup>91</sup> Reuters News Service, 13.06.95.

<sup>92</sup> Kazakhstan And Turkey Agree on Oil Pipeline to Mediterranean, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 17.08.95.

<sup>93</sup> On 7 May 1995 Clinton issued the executive order prohibiting US trade and investment with Iran.

market, so there could be no guarantee that Iranian transit charges would be lower than Russian. Hence all the plans for alternative pipelines looked like bluffs, designed to make Russia more conciliatory.

On 4 October 1995 Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Tokayev indicated that plans for the CPC had come to a standstill since the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development had declared the proposed pipeline through Russia "not financible".<sup>94</sup> Meanwhile the OOC had managed to attract only the \$35 million needed to prepare a feasibility study, against an estimated total requirement of \$1.5 billion.<sup>95</sup> It was also in October that Kazakhstan's Oil and Gas Minister Balgimbayev sent a letter to Shafranik, calling for a meeting in Almaty on 6 November to discuss a new pipeline from Tengiz excluding the OOC, which had failed to meet the 1 October deadline for attracting finance to the CPC. Balgimbayev said Chevron, other Western oil companies and LUKoil had already started work on an alternative export project.<sup>96</sup>

As revealed on 19 October by a LUKoil spokesman, all this time the company had been negotiating secretly with the Kazakh authorities for a share in the Tengiz project.<sup>97</sup> Thus the struggle over the pipeline routes and LUKoil's participation in the Tengizchevroil joint venture were closely interlinked.<sup>98</sup> The first breakthrough came on 31 October 1995, when Kazakhstan's Oil and Gas Ministry and LUKoil signed a protocol giving LUKoil a stake in Tengizchevroil.<sup>99</sup> Though the size of LUKoil's share had not yet been fixed, the decision in principle to involve it in the joint venture cleared the way for sorting out the situation within the CPC. On the day the protocol was signed, Balgimbayev announced that Kazakhstan was seeking agreement with Russian and US oil companies to set up a new pipeline consortium. He added that the OOC "can also participate in the new international company on equal terms; it will receive as much as it invests",<sup>100</sup> and also confirmed that Kazakhstan was prepared to sell part of its share in Tengizchevroil to the US Mobil company.<sup>101</sup>

Subsequent Russian steps were not hard to predict. Naturally, CPC did not begin construction of the first phase of the pipeline, scheduled for 1 January 1996, because of the time taken for "structural overhaul" of the consortium. John Deuss had played his part, and now had to go. The first rumours about his intention to leave the OOC presidency and the CPC began to circulate in January 1996,<sup>102</sup> and

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<sup>94</sup> Reuters News Service, 06.10.95.

<sup>95</sup> Segodnya, 19.09.95.

<sup>96</sup> Reuters News Service, 19.10.95.

<sup>97</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>98</sup> Russia applied similar tactics to others of Kazakhstan's projects. For example, on 14 February 1995 M.Alimov, an aide to Rosneft's Chairman A.Putilov, said the company was considering plans to take part in the consortium exploring Kazakhstan's Caspian shelf. On 18 August 1995, during a visit to Kazakhstan, LUKoil's President Alekperov said his company wanted to take part in the Kazakhstankaspiyshelf project. [Reuters News Service, 14.02.95; Segodnya, 21.02.95; Reuters News Service, 18.08.95].

<sup>99</sup> Kazakhs Ready to Give Russian Firm Stake in Tengiz Oil Deal, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 07.11.95.

<sup>100</sup> Kazakhs Set up Alternative Pipeline Consortium, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 10.11.95.

<sup>101</sup> Reuters News Service, 31.10.95.

<sup>102</sup> Reuters News Service, 19.01.96.

his resignation followed in late February.<sup>103</sup> Deuss and Omani Petroleum and Minerals Minister Said Bin Shanfari resigned from the CPC board, and were replaced by Omani Commerce and Industry Minister Maqbool Bin Sultan and OOC Deputy Chairman Mohammed Bin Nasir Al Ghusaibi.<sup>104</sup> A period of tough and prolonged bargaining over redistribution of shares within the CPC then followed. Progress on this was hindered by hold ups in the parallel negotiations on LUKoil's stake in Tengizchevroil.

Only on 16 April 1996 did LUKoil's President Alekperov announced that Chevron had agreed to transfer one-tenth of its 50% stake in Tengizchevroil to LUKoil, in return for a \$30 million bonus payment.<sup>105</sup> As a reciprocal gesture, Russia agreed on 17 April to increase Tengizchevroil's quota of oil to be pumped through the existing pipeline by 4.5 times over the previous quota of one million tonnes per year.<sup>106</sup> Finally, on 23 April Nazarbayev revealed that all problems had been resolved, and all documents were ready for signing during Yeltsin's forthcoming visit to Almaty.<sup>107</sup> The signing took place on 27 April 1996. Under the protocol on CPC reorganisation Russia received 24% of the shares, Kazakhstan 19%, Oman 7%, Chevron 15%, LUKoil 12.5%, Mobil and Rosneft 7.5% each, AGIP and British Gas 2% each, Kazakhstan's Manaigas and Oryx 1.75% each.<sup>108</sup> This was a significant success for Moscow's oil diplomacy. The combined Russian share was 44%, and in cooperation with Oman it could control all decision-making in the consortium.

The final batch of documents establishing the CPC's new structure was signed in Moscow on 6 December 1996. Officials said the pipeline's forecast cost was \$2 billion, up from previous estimates of \$1.2-1.5 billion.<sup>109</sup> The first phase of the project was to be completed in 1999, and the pipeline was to become operational at the end of 2000. In the first stage 28 million tonnes of Kazakh oil was to be exported annually via the pipeline, and this was expected to increase later to 67 million tonnes. It was estimated that over the project's 40-year life Russian central and local government bodies would collect over 20 billion dollars in taxes and transit charges. In addition, much of the pipeline capacity would be used for Russian exports, stimulating the development of Russian oilfields.<sup>110</sup> It was decided that the CPC management team would be headed by a general director from LUKoil, and composed of representatives from the other parties involved.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Jane's Intelligence Review, March 1996, p. 7.

<sup>104</sup> APS Review Downstream Trends, 18.03.96.

<sup>105</sup> Russian Oil Company Gets 10-Per-Cent Share in Kazakh Project, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 19.04.96.

<sup>106</sup> Kazakhstan Permitted to Pump More Oil Across Russia, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 20.04.96.

<sup>107</sup> Reuters News Service, 23.04.96.

<sup>108</sup> Reuters News Service, 27.04.96.

<sup>109</sup> Reuters News Service, 06.12.96.

<sup>110</sup> Caspian Pipeline Deal Signed in Moscow, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 09.12.96; Reuters News Service, 19.11.97.

<sup>111</sup> Reuters News Service, 14.03.97.

On 16 January 1997 LUKoil and Chevron agreed on all the main terms for transferring one-tenth of Chevron's stake in Tengizchevroil to LUKoil. "The price of LUKoil's stake has been agreed, and talks are now focusing on when and how much LUKoil will pay,"- Alekperov said.<sup>112</sup> He added that LUKoil's next step would be to buy into Kazakhstan's stake, and an official proposal to that effect had already been made to Kazakhstan.<sup>113</sup> On 25 April Yeltsin endorsed the agreement on division of equity in the CPC. His decree contained measures for implementing the final CPC restructuring agreement, and rules governing the company, CPC-Russia, set up to represent the Russian government.<sup>114</sup>

The situation with Karachaganak oil and gas field developed on similar lines to Tengiz. Initially the Karachaganak project looked very promising for the new investors, British Gas and Agip, doubling British Gas' oil and gas reserves, and pushing it into the big league in the world energy industry. The reserves were expected to last for 70 years, yielding four times as much gas as British Gas' Morecombe field, and as much oil as the North Sea's giant Forties field. After an initial investment of \$20 million, British Gas and Agip would spend up to \$6 billion in the next decade to develop the field. British Gas said that once it had worked out a profit-sharing deal with Kazakhstan, oil and gas could be piped to Europe within months.<sup>115</sup> Unlike Tengiz, Karachaganak was an active field, linked by pipeline to the Orenburg gas processing plant in Russia. From there the gas could be exported by the main pipeline to Western Europe.

The major problem for the investors was securing guaranteed access to the Russian pipeline to Western Europe. They pressed the Kazakh government to obtain guarantees, and refused to make major investments until an agreement on transportation was reached. The Russians, because of the substantial amount already invested in Karachaganak in Soviet times, naturally wanted a share in it, but were not invited. When Chernomyrdin visited Almaty in December 1992, he and Tereshchenko signed an agreement "On Cooperation in the Industries of Fuel and Energy Complexes", which said the two countries would continue cooperation "in exploitation of gas fields, and primarily the Karachaganak field", and Russia undertook to accept deliveries of Karachaganak gas to the Orenburg processing plant. Kazakhstan needed the agreement to convince its Western partners that they would have no problems with gas transit through Russia. The agreement did not oblige Kazakhstan to give Russia a stake in Karachaganak, but neither did it specify the quantity of gas Russia would accept, or the price it would pay. Russia refused to include them in the agreement; they were to be determined by a contract to be concluded between Russia's gas monopoly "Gazprom" and Kazakhstan's

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<sup>112</sup> Talks on LUKoil Stake In Kazakh-US Oil Venture Complete, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 24.01.97.

<sup>113</sup> Reuters News Service, 16.01.97.

<sup>114</sup> Interfax, 25.04.96.

<sup>115</sup> Guardian, 02.07.92.

state company "Kazakhgaz".<sup>116</sup> Unless and until that contract was concluded, the agreement was valueless, because Russia could price its services high enough to make the project uneconomic.

Not surprisingly, the agreement failed to convince Kazakhstan's Western partners that they had valid guarantees for gas transportation, and the negotiations on a production-sharing agreement with Kazakhstan stalled. Originally scheduled for 1 October 1993, signing of the agreement was postponed several times. An Agip executive in Almaty said that there were "no problems left to deal with in Kazakhstan, but we are concerned about the state of relations with Russia... The question of transportation of course must be resolved, and that is the subject of governmental talks between Russia and Kazakhstan".<sup>117</sup> Oleg Kireyev, head of the foreign-trade association handling the deal for Kazakhstan, explained that the sides were "unable to agree the terms of the deal without Russia's participation".<sup>118</sup>

On 6 December 1993 Kazakh Energy and Fuel Resources Minister K. Baikenov announced that the deal could be signed in the "first quarter of next year".<sup>119</sup> As in the case of CPC, Kazakhstan tried to put pressure on Russia by proposing an alternative gas pipeline, by-passing Russian territory. For example, in March 1994 on the eve of his visit to Moscow Nazarbayev suddenly revealed a hitherto "secret" project to build a pipeline from Karachaganak to the West via Turkey.<sup>120</sup> But during the visit no agreements on Karachaganak were reached, and the project was not even mentioned in the associated documents. The topic was raised again during a meeting between Chernomyrdin and Tereshchenko in Uralsk on 28 August 1994, but they again failed to reach agreement.<sup>121</sup> Meanwhile the situation at Karachaganak continued to deteriorate. In 1993 gas production shrank to 3.6 billion m<sup>3</sup>, and in 1994 was expected to fall to 50% of the 1991 level. Only 15 of 130 oil and gas wells and only one of 32 drilling machines were functioning.<sup>122</sup> According to Azerbayev, President of Kazakhgaz, workers and engineers at Karachaganak had not been paid for several months, and this had led to an exodus of highly qualified personnel.<sup>123</sup>

These critical conditions precipitated a change in the Kazakh position. On 4 October 1994 Deputy Oil and Gas Minister Lobayev revealed to the press that British Gas and Agip had agreed to give 15% of their share in the Karachaganak deal to Gazprom. He added that agreement with Gazprom was necessary to gain access to the Russian gas pipeline network, "to avoid any repetition of the sad

<sup>116</sup> Soglashenie mezhdru Pravitel'stvom Respubliki Kazakhstan i Pravitel'stvom Rossiyskoy Federatsii o sotrudnichestve v otraslyakh toplivno-energeticheskikh kompleksov // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, pp. 122-126.

<sup>117</sup> Petroleum Economist, February 1994, p. 22.

<sup>118</sup> Gazprom Claims Cut of Kazakhstan Gas Field Deal, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 21.10.94.

<sup>119</sup> Reuters News Service, 06.12.93.

<sup>120</sup> Financial Times, 25.03.94.

<sup>121</sup> Reuters News Service, 28.08.94.

<sup>122</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiei E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, p. 77, Reuters News Service, 04.10.94.

<sup>123</sup> Azerbaev, E., V edinstve nasha sila // Evraziya: narody, kultury, religii, No.1(3), 1995, p. 25.

experience of Tengizchevroil". Kazakh Oil and Gas Minister R.Cherdabayev told Reuters a final contract could be signed by the end of 1994, but Lobayev was more cautious, saying only "within the next year".<sup>124</sup>

On 14 November 1994 formal talks began between British Gas and Gazprom. A British Gas official said "it is normal for Russia to join this project, and even a logical step, since from the very beginning there were plans that gas will be transported through a Russian pipeline and processed inside Russian territory in Orenburg".<sup>125</sup> British Gas Project Director Peter Dranfield stated that "since mid-1992 it has become evident that involvement of Gazprom in the project would greatly assist in achieving full development of the field".<sup>126</sup> These statements indicated that the participants in the project thought that by drawing Gazprom into it they would secure guaranteed gas transits from Kazakhstan to Western Europe. They were mistaken.

Initially, everything went as it was meant to. On 8 December 1994 Kazakhstan's Ministry of Oil and Gas Industry and Gazprom signed an agreement "On Joint Activity in Exploitation and Development of the Karachaganak Field". The document said Gazprom would participate on equal terms with Kazakhgaz, British Gas and Agip. Kazakh Prime Minister Kazhegeldin, who attended the signing ceremony in Moscow, was quoted in an official press-release as saying Russia and Kazakhstan "were together again".<sup>127</sup> This agreement was backed up by one at governmental level, signed on 10 February 1995 by Chernomyrdin and Kazhegeldin, which said both sides recognised the desirability of Russian participation in exploiting and developing the Karachaganak field, and endorsed the agreement of 8 December 1994.<sup>128</sup>

These documents opened the way for concluding a production-sharing agreement. It was signed by British Gas, Agip and Gazprom on 2 March 1995 and was termed an "interim production-sharing agreement". The accord envisaged investment estimated at around \$320 million over an initial development period of up to four years. During this phase annual output was expected to be 4-4.5 million tonnes of oil and up to 4 billion m<sup>3</sup> of gas. Kazakhstan would receive 85% of profits, and the remaining 15% would be shared among the three contractors, with 6.375% each to British Gas and Agip, and 2.25% to Gazprom. In addition, Kazakhstan was to cover contractors' production costs, estimated at \$70-80 million per year. If phase one was successful, the contractors would commit themselves to a far more extensive project, involving a 40-year investment worth \$10 billion to develop the field to its full potential.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>124</sup> Reuters News Service, 04.10.94.

<sup>125</sup> British Gas in Talks with Russia on Kazakh Gas Deposit, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 18.11.94.

<sup>126</sup> Lloyd's List, 28.11.96

<sup>127</sup> Reuters News Service, 09.12.94.

<sup>128</sup> Soglashenie mezhdru Pravitel'stvom Respubliki Kazakhstan i Pravitel'stvom Rossiyskoy Federatsii o sotrudnichestve v razrabotke i razvitii Karachaganakskogo neftegazokondensatnogo mestorozhdeniya // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, p. 245.

<sup>129</sup> Auken, B., Julamanov, R., Neft' i gaz Kazakhstana (ekonomicheskii obzor), Almaty: IRK, 1995, p. 6.

Gazprom later failed to pay its share of the costs, and in summer 1996 withdrew from the project,<sup>130</sup> ostensibly because of the other partners' refusal to recognise Russia's previous investment in Karachaganak as a contribution towards Gazprom's share in the project. But the real reason was that from the outset Gazprom had not intended to help Kazakhstan export its gas. As the major supplier of gas to Europe (60% of all European gas imports)<sup>131</sup> Gazprom had no intention of creating a competitor for itself on this lucrative market, especially since Russia, with huge gas reserves, did not need Kazakhstan's gas for re-export. This was made very clear by Gazprom's Chairman R. Vyakhirev, who said at a news conference in Moscow on 7 August 1997 that his company would "under no circumstances" agree to give Kazakh gas an outlet through Russia to world markets. "Surrendering one's market when there is a lack of sufficient capacity is, I believe, nothing less than a crime against Russia," he said. However, Vyakhirev promised to accept some Kazakh gas for processing at the Orenburg plant.<sup>132</sup>

After Gazprom's withdrawal, the other participants in the Karachaganak project sought new partners. In October 1996 Kazakh Oil and Gas Minister Balgimbayev announced that the project would be joined by US Texaco and LUKoil.<sup>133</sup> Gazprom's replacement by LUKoil appeared logical for Russia, since LUKoil, not Gazprom, was responsible for "coordinating" Russian energy projects in the CIS. Besides LUKoil is an oil, not a gas company, and the change denoted a shift in Russian perception of Karachaganak, as primarily an oil rather than a gas field. This combination also indicated establishment of a closer link between Karachaganak and the CPC, where LUKoil plays a major role and British Gas and Agip have a 2% share each.

On 18 November 1997 a 40-year production-sharing agreement with the Kazakhstan government to develop the Karachaganak field was signed in Washington in a ceremony attended by Nazarbayev and US Vice-President Gore. Agip and British Gas will continue as joint operators, Texaco received 20% of their combined share and LUKoil acquired Gazprom's share. Initial production is projected at 3.6 million tonnes of oil and gas condensate annually, to peak from the year 2002 at 12 million tonnes per annum. Around 6.0 million tonnes of hydrocarbons annually would be transported along the new pipeline developed by CPC.<sup>134</sup> The agreement, however, failed to tackle the issue of what to do with the natural gas. It is highly unlikely that Gazprom will change its position and agree to export gas to Europe through its pipeline system. Some of the gas will be used for Kazakhstan's own needs, and transported to other parts of the republic either through Russia or by means of swap arrangements. Another alternative is to sell the gas to Gazprom at the Russian-Kazakhstan border, but, naturally, Gazprom will pay only a very low price. Gas can also be injected back into the field to

<sup>130</sup> APS Review Gas Market Trends, 15.07.96.

<sup>131</sup> Reuters News Service, 07.08.97.

<sup>132</sup> Russian Company Declines Kazakh Gas Outlet to World Markets, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 15.08.97.

<sup>133</sup> Financial Times, 07.10.96.

<sup>134</sup> Reuters News Service, 19.11.97; Kommersant-Daily, 21.11.97.

improve oil output, but the economic rationale behind this option is still to be seen. Of course, there is always an option of building an alternative pipeline eastwards to north-east China or to India and Pakistan. But the cost of such a pipeline will be high, and will require investors ready to take economic risks.

The diplomatic struggle over the pipeline issue was closely interlinked with that over the legal status of the Caspian Sea. Caspian shelf energy resources are without doubt of great importance for Russia's energy strategy in CIS. Earlier estimates, based on satellite photography and some preliminary ground research, indicated that the Caspian shelf bordering Kazakhstan could contain 3-3.5 billion tonnes of oil and 2-2.5 trillion m<sup>3</sup> of gas.<sup>135</sup> In a recent statement, US Secretary of Energy F. Pena estimated proven oil reserves in the Caspian region as between 2.1 and 4.1 billion tonnes, comparable to those in the North Sea. The Caspian region's possible reserves could yield another 23 billion tonnes, roughly a quarter of Middle East reserves. Proven gas reserves are estimated at 6.7-9.5 trillion m<sup>3</sup>, comparable to North America's reserves. Possible gas reserves could yield another 9.3 trillion m<sup>3</sup>.<sup>136</sup> Before the collapse of the USSR, Kazakhstan opposed oil and gas prospecting in the northern Caspian, on environmental grounds. But at the end of 1992 Minister for Energy Baykenov, while in the USA, officially stated that Kazakhstan was prepared to start work in the area.<sup>137</sup> These plans encountered opposition from Moscow.

The controversy started to develop when on 3 December 1993 a consortium of Western companies signed an agreement with Kazakhstan to explore the geological, geophysical and ecological features of the Kazakh region of the Caspian shelf. The consortium, formed in June 1993, included seven companies - AGIP (Italy), British Gas, the joint British Petroleum and Statoil (Norway), Mobil Oil (United States), Shell (Holland/UK) and Total (France). Kazakhstan's contribution consisted solely in granting authorisation. The project was to be coordinated by the Kazakhstankaspiyshelf State Company, formed in February 1993. The project's cost was estimated at \$500 million, and its duration three years, after which the consortium would be dissolved and the firms to undertake extraction determined by auction. Consortium members were promised preferential terms. Kazakhstan reserved the right to all the geophysical information.<sup>138</sup> Russia was not invited to participate.

The contract was concluded even though after the collapse of the USSR the Caspian Sea's legal status was indeterminate. Previous Russian (Soviet)-Iranian agreements were inapplicable to the new situation manifested by the emergence of three more littoral states. Moscow's first serious attempt to tackle the issue was made on 15 October 1993, when the prime ministers of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan met in Astrakhan to discuss the Caspian's status. At the

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<sup>135</sup> Auken, B., Julamanov, R., *Neft' i gaz Kazakhstana (ekonomicheskii obzor)*, Almaty: IRK, 1995, p. 10.

<sup>136</sup> Pena Wins Support for Oil Transport Corridor, File ID:97111808.GWE, USIA Database, 18.11.97.

<sup>137</sup> Auken, B., Julamanov, R., *Neft' i gaz Kazakhstana (ekonomicheskii obzor)*, Almaty: IRK, 1995, p. 10.

<sup>138</sup> *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 04.12.93.



meeting Russia outlined its position, to the effect that all questions related to the use of natural resources should be settled jointly by all the Caspian states. The participants agreed to set up a council to coordinate economic cooperation in the Caspian region. At the press-conference after the meeting Chernomyrdin announced that they had decided to formulate a common view on the Caspian problem, and that ways of protecting its natural wealth would be discussed at the next conference of CIS heads of government. Tereshchenko told reporters that his cabinet had not yet prepared a plan to develop oil and gas deposits on the Caspian shelf. He pledged that exploration of the shelf would be examined and supervised by an intergovernmental council on oil and gas, to be formed under CIS auspices.<sup>139</sup> But despite these assurances, Kazakhstan less than two months later decided unilaterally to have the shelf explored by Western companies.

Not surprisingly, Kazakhstan's move caused irritation in Moscow, especially aggravated by the circumstance that Azerbaijan was negotiating a deal with a British Petroleum-led consortium to prospect for oil on Azerbaijan's Caspian shelf. If both projects went ahead unhindered, Russia would have lost control over a large part of Caspian energy resources, and consequently a large share of its influence over the policies of the CIS states with Caspian coastlines. The Russians raised the issue of the Caspian Sea's status during Nazarbayev's visit to Moscow in March 1994, but with little result. The joint protocol of the meeting between Tereshchenko and Chernomyrdin was limited to instructing their Foreign Ministries "to draft initial proposals within one month on the whole range of problems connected with the use of the Caspian Sea basin, for the purpose of submitting them for consideration by the Caspian Sea states".<sup>140</sup>

With the issue of the Caspian's legal status heating up, Kazakhstan sought to establish at least a semblance of a naval presence there, and, during US Secretary of Defence Perry's visit to Almaty on 19-20 March 1994, requested US assistance in forming a coast guard, ostensibly to prevent infiltration by Islamic "fundamentalist movements". Perry promised aid, and before the end of February 1996 American-made patrol boats were delivered.<sup>141</sup> Almaty made similar approaches to Russia, but Moscow, not wanting a Kazakhstan naval presence in the Caspian, was unresponsive.

On 28 April 1994 the Russian government notified the British Embassy that Caspian projects "cannot be recognised" without its approval, on the grounds that "the Caspian Sea is an enclosed water reservoir with a single eco-system, and represents an object of joint use within whose boundaries all issues or activities including resource development have to be resolved with participation of all the Caspian countries", and that "no steps by any Caspian state aimed at acquiring any

<sup>139</sup> Premiers Agree to Set up Council for Cooperation in Caspian Region, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 19.10.93, Reuter News Service, 02.06.94.

<sup>140</sup> Protokol vstrechi Glav Pravitelstv Respubliki Kazakhstan i Rossiyskoy Federatsii // Kazakhstansko-rossiyskie otnosheniya, 1991-1995 gody, Sbornik dokumentov i materialov, Moscow: Posol'stvo Respubliki Kazakhstan v Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 1995, p. 177.

<sup>141</sup> Perry Calls Dismantlement "Defense by Other Means", File ID: EUR410, USIA Database, 07.04.94; Joint Statement on US-Kazakhstan Defense Relations File ID:96022601.WWE, USIA Database, 26.02.96.

kind of advantage with regard to the areas and resources can be recognised... any unilateral actions are devoid of a legal basis".<sup>142</sup> The note was directed to the British Embassy because of British Petroleum's leading role in the Azerbaijan project, but it had very direct repercussions for Kazakhstan. On 2 June 1994 Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Karasin said "the Caspian Sea should not be divided into sectors" and "all questions related to the use of natural resources should be settled by all the Caspian states".<sup>143</sup>

Initially Kazakhstan's reaction to these Russian demarches was passive. After all Kazakhstankaspiyshelf's project was only at the preliminary exploration stage, not the developmental, as was Azerbaijan's. But some members of Nazarbayev's entourage obviously decided that Kazakhstan should take a more active stance as a preventive measure. In a report on Kazakhstan's foreign policy objectives, published in June 1994, Kasenov suggested that Kazakh diplomacy should pay greater attention to the Caspian's legal status, because "it could turn out to be explosive for the relationships between all five Caspian littoral states".<sup>144</sup> On 12 July B.Kuandykov, President of Kazakhstankaspiyshelf, said in an interview that foreign oil companies exploring the shelf off Kazakhstan were perturbed by Russian statements on the sea's legal status.<sup>145</sup>

Thus Kazakhstan's position on the Caspian contradicted Russia's. Moreover, Almaty immediately began to form a coalition with Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan to counter the Russian demands. On 19 July 1994 Kazakhstan sent a draft "Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea" to the other Caspian States. The draft was based on the concept of a land-locked sea, and attempted to apply the provisions of the UN Convention on Law of the Sea. It envisaged delimiting the coastal states' borders on the Caspian, including internal waters, territorial waters and exclusive economic zones, as well as determining each state's continental shelf. Coastal states were to possess national jurisdiction and exclusive rights to explore and exploit the mineral resources in their sector of the seabed.<sup>146</sup> The draft contained some concessions to the Russian position, recognising the need for unhampered navigation and fishing, each state's ecological responsibility, and need for a coordinating body, to ensure a balance between the interests of all the littoral states.<sup>147</sup> But these were token concessions.

An important element of Kazakhstan's diplomatic tactics was internationalisation of the Caspian Sea dispute, by involving other powerful players likely to support Kazakhstan against Moscow. This was hinted at in a report by Kazakhstan's Deputy Foreign Minister Gizzatov at a conference on foreign policy issues held in Almaty in February 1995. He said "the Caspian problem has

<sup>142</sup> Financial Times, 31.05.94.

<sup>143</sup> Reuters News Service, 02.06.94.

<sup>144</sup> Kasenov, U., *Osnovnyye itogi vneshnepoliticheskoy deyatel'nosti Respubliki Kazakhstan i ee prioritetye zadachi*, Almaty: KISI, 1994, p. 25.

<sup>145</sup> Reuters News Service, 12.07.94.

<sup>146</sup> Gizzatov, V., *Pravovoy status Kaspiyskogo morya: kondominium ili delimitatsiya* // *Kazakhstan i mirovoe sobshchestvo*, No.1, 1996, p. 46.

<sup>147</sup> Kazakhstan: realii i perspektivy nezavisimogo razvitiya / Pod obschey redaktsiei E.M.Kozhokina, Moscow: RISI, 1995, p. 80.

transcended regional boundaries, and even more clearly is becoming a factor in world politics". Among those whose interests were involved, Gizzatov named Turkey, Georgia, USA and Western Europe.<sup>148</sup> However, among these, only the USA had power to exercise pressure on Russia. US policy towards the Caspian was just being developed at that time, but its basis was already recognition of the area's importance for American economic interests.

On 27-28 September 1994 during Yeltsin's visit, Clinton raised the issue of the Caspian Sea, and urged him to disavow his Foreign Ministry's statements that Moscow would not recognise contracts to exploit the Caspian fields. Yeltsin replied that the issue should be discussed bilaterally by experts.<sup>149</sup> This was the result of pressure on Yeltsin by the powerful oil and gas lobby, which was not prepared to forego its interests in the Caspian without a fight. On 5 October 1994 the Russian mission to the UN distributed a document entitled "The Russian Federation's Position on the legal regime of the Caspian Sea", which reiterated that unilateral action by any single state there was unlawful, and would be resisted.<sup>150</sup> It asserted that the International Law of the Sea could not be applied to the Caspian Sea, which has no natural connection to the oceans. In Russia's opinion the legal regime determined by the Russian-Iranian Treaty of 1921 and Soviet-Iranian Treaty of 1940 was still in force. Therefore exploration and exploitation, conservation and management of the Caspian seabed should be subject to agreement by all the littoral states. The existing legal regime could be improved by concluding new agreements between the Caspian States, but must not be replaced by a totally new regime. Finally, the document warned that Russia did not exclude undertaking whatever measures it considered necessary to make other Caspian states comply with the existing legal regime.<sup>151</sup>

Release of the document preceded the opening on 11 October of a two-day conference in Moscow of the five Caspian littoral states, called to discuss the establishment of a joint legal body on the Caspian Sea. The main idea was for it to regulate all aspects of use of the Sea and its resources, and it was an Iranian initiative, first put forward in October 1992. Iran was concerned about the growing Western, especially American, presence in the Caspian, and seeking to put a check on it by drawing the former USSR republics into a regional organisation.<sup>152</sup> Iran followed Russia in condemning as "illegal" the agreement between Azerbaijan and the Western consortium, signed on 20 September 1994. Thus a coincidence of interests emerged between Russia's and Iran's positions, and Moscow took full advantage of this.

At the conference the Iranian delegation expressed concern about the "irreparable damage that uncoordinated exploitation was likely to cause to the

<sup>148</sup> Gizzatov, V., *Kaspiy dolzhen stat' morem mira, dobrososedstva i sotrudnichestva* // *Vneshnyaya politika Kazakhstana, Sbornik statey*, Almaty: MID Respubliki Kazakhstan, 1995, p. 183.

<sup>149</sup> *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 05.10.94.

<sup>150</sup> *Independent*, 03.11.94

<sup>151</sup> Gizzatov, V., *The Legal Status of the Caspian Sea* // *Central Asian Quarterly*, Vol.2, No.3, 1995, p. 34.

<sup>152</sup> Khodakov, A., *The Legal Framework for Regional Cooperation in the Caspian Sea Region* // *Central Asian Quarterly*, Vol.2, No.3, 1995, p. 32.

fragile marine environment".<sup>153</sup> Initially it seemed that combined Russian-Iranian pressure would make the other Caspian states agree to creation of a joint body to monitor the Caspian. During a break in the conference, Kozyrev told journalists that "some progress has been made towards an agreement on regional cooperation around the Caspian Sea."<sup>154</sup> But in the end Kazakhstan's and Azerbaijan's desire to revise the legal status, and their insistence that further cooperation in the Caspian region be conditional upon such revision, prevented conclusion of this agreement.<sup>155</sup> The maximum the five nations tentatively agreed was "to coordinate approaches to various aspects of their activity in the Caspian Sea in order to make the region a zone of stability, good neighbourliness, peace and security".<sup>156</sup>

Kazakh diplomatic tactics at the subsequent negotiations consisted in trying to undermine the existing legal regime, and replace it with a new regime, based on international Law of the Sea. To do so Kazakh diplomacy needed to remove legal obstacles embodied in the Russian/Soviet-Iranian treaties. Initially Kazakhstan simply claimed that in the new international situation previous agreements on the Caspian had become invalid, and a new legal status for the sea should be defined. This line was reflected in Gizzatov's speech at a conference on foreign policy issues held in Almaty in February 1995. Gizzatov claimed that "The Caspian Sea regime in the form defined in the Russian-Persian Treaty of 1921 and the Soviet-Iranian Treaty of 1940 does not correspond to the changed political situation and new realities", because they did not contain "any reference whatsoever to the most important components of the legal status of international water reservoirs i.e. regimes for exploitation of the seabed and what lies beneath it, for ecology, for use of air space over the sea, not to mention such basic questions as the territorial sea and adjacent exclusive economic zone, continental shelf, etc".

Kazakhstan advanced several arguments to justify its position. For example, Gizzatov disagreed with the argument that the Caspian Sea was exempt from the Law of the Sea Convention because the convention did not mention it. He noted that "the convention does not contain a list of the seas to which its provisions could be applied", and that if the argument was valid, any part of the world ocean not specifically mentioned could be claimed as exempt from the Convention. Another Kazakh argument was that the Convention should apply because the Caspian is connected to the high seas through the Volga-Don river system. Following this logic, the Law of the Sea Convention would be applicable to, say, Kazakhstan's Lake Balkhash, because it is connected to the high seas through the Ob-Irtysh river system, or to the Great Lakes between the USA and Canada. But nobody has ever seriously tried to apply the Law of the Sea in this overextended way.

<sup>153</sup> Granmayeh, A., *The Caspian Sea in Iranian History and Politics* // *Central Asian Quarterly*, Vol.2, No.3, 1995, p. 39.

<sup>154</sup> Reuters News Service, 12.10.94.

<sup>155</sup> Granmayeh, A., *The Caspian Sea in Iranian History and Politics* // *Central Asian Quarterly*, Vol.2, No.3, 1995, p. 39.

<sup>156</sup> Lloyd's List, 15.10.94, Reuters News Service, 24.10.94.

Russia's position on the Caspian issue was based on two main postulates. First, that the Caspian Sea, a land-locked water reservoir with no connection to any ocean, could be regarded only as a lake. Second were international obligations assumed under the principle of continuity by the former USSR's legal successor-states. These were contained in the Alma-Ata declaration, signed by all former Soviet republics on 21 December 1991, and more specifically in the memorandum "On the Question of Legal Succession in Relation to Treaties of the Former USSR, Constituting a Common Interest", signed by Nazarbayev at the CIS summit in Moscow on 6 July 1992. The memorandum singled out international agreements concluded by the former USSR which touched upon the interests of several CIS states, and described as requiring "decisions or actions on the part of those CIS states to which they were applicable".<sup>157</sup> Both Russian/Soviet-Iranian treaties on the Caspian fell into that category.

At an international oil conference on the Caspian Sea in London in late February 1995, Director-General Khodakov of the Russian Foreign Ministry Legal Department explained that treaties between the former Soviet Union and Iran had established the Caspian Sea as an "object of common use by the Caspian countries, open for utilisation by them on an equal basis". He claimed that right by any one state to use the sea for its own purposes "can only be acquired on the basis of an international agreement", and "unilateral moves by Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan to declare they owned sectors of the sea and sign deals with Western oil companies would be contested by Russia".<sup>158</sup>

Khodakov argued that the principle of "common use" was introduced by Article 2 of the 1921 Treaty, which said that Russia and Iran "both have the right of free navigation on the Caspian Sea under their own flags", and was further developed in the 1940 Soviet-Iranian Treaty on Trade and Shipping, Article 12 of which stipulated that "trading vessels carrying the flag of one of the Contracting parties in the Caspian Sea will be treated in the ports of the other party... on a totally equal footing with national vessels". At the same time, paragraph 4 of the article reserved fishing rights up to ten nautical miles from the coast to vessels of the littoral states. In Khodakov's interpretation, combination of these provisions established the Caspian "as an object of common use by the Caspian countries, open for utilisation by them on an equal basis across its entire area". Khodakov claimed that the "clearest indication" of the Caspian Sea as an object of common use was contained in the exchange of notes which accompanied conclusion of the 1940 Treaty. They noted that both countries considered the Caspian Sea "a Soviet and Iranian sea". Khodakov stressed that "enlargement of the "Caspian Club" did not *per se* imply any change in the Caspian's legal status". "Its legal regime as an

<sup>157</sup> Tsibukov, V., *Problemy pravopriemstva v Sodruzhestve Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv*, Moscow: MGIMO, 1994, p. 52.

<sup>158</sup> Lloyd's List, 28.02.95.

object of common use by all Caspian countries, remains the same until such time as they conclude a new agreement altering this status".<sup>159</sup>

Russian adherence to the "common use" principle was economically and geopolitically logical. Semi-official Russian geological estimates showed that if the Caspian were divided into sectors, firstly, the potential recoverable resources in the Russian sector (2 billion tonnes of oil equivalent) would come below Kazakhstan's (4.5 billion) and Azerbaijan's (4 billion), and not far above Turkmenistan's (1.5 billion).<sup>160</sup> Secondly, all former Soviet republics would have sovereign rights in their respective sectors, and Russia would be unable to influence with whom and to what extent they would cooperate in the future. On the other hand, a "common use" regime would necessitate some multilateral body to govern exploitation of Caspian resources, and on it Russia, as the major power, would have a decisive voice.

Not surprisingly, at the London conference Russia's position met with objections not only from Kazakhstan, but also from the USA. G.Rose, Director of International Energy Policy at the State Department, openly sided with Almaty. Rose said Russia could not impose its proposals on other states: "differences of opinion should be settled quickly in international courts, and through direct talks among the parties". He also argued that old treaties on the Caspian Sea had not meant cooperation, even before the break up of the Soviet Union. "At no time did the former Soviet Union offer to share development of the Caspian with Iran, nor did it seek Iran's approval of Caspian region developments that might have environmental impacts".<sup>161</sup> Interestingly, American diplomacy, more experienced than Kazakh, chose not to challenge the validity of the Caspian Sea legal regime established by the Russian (Soviet)-Iranian treaties, but to question Moscow's interpretation of it. The Americans also tried to internationalise the dispute by bringing it to world legal forums, evidently expecting that there they could muster the necessary support against Russia.

American intervention in the Caspian Sea dispute caused irritation in Moscow. On 22 July 1995 an unidentified high-ranking Foreign Ministry official said that Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan were acting under US influence. He was quoted as saying that "the Americans, who are interested in Caspian oil, absolutely overtly exert pressure on Baku and Almaty, appealing for division of the Caspian Sea and promising beneficial cooperation and large investments," that dividing the sea into national zones not only posed a threat to its ecological system, but would also leave Russia with a very small sector of the sea.<sup>162</sup> Kazakhstan's reaction followed without delay. On 26 July Gizzatov publicly denied that the USA was

<sup>159</sup> Khodakov, A., *The Legal Framework for Regional Cooperation in the Caspian Sea Region* // *Central Asian Quarterly*, Vol.2, No.3, 1995, p. 31.

<sup>160</sup> *Australian Financial Review*, 16.12.97.

<sup>161</sup> *Lloyd's List*, 28.02.95.

<sup>162</sup> *Russia Ready to Get Tough over Legal Status of Caspian Sea*, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 25.07.95.

exerting pressure on Almaty. "We determine our position proceeding from our own national interests".<sup>163</sup>

A major shift in Kazakhstan's position occurred at the conference of Heads of Legal Departments of the Caspian states' Foreign Ministries, except Russia's, held in Almaty on 26-27 September 1995. Probably realising that their initial stance was difficult to defend, the Kazakhs dropped their insistence on application of Law of the Sea to the Caspian, and agreed to regard it as a lake, and submitted a new version of a draft Convention on the Caspian Sea's legal status.<sup>164</sup> Gizzatov explained that despite the change in Kazakhstan's position, Almaty still insisted that territorial waters, subsea resource rights and fishing zones should be awarded to coastal states, on the grounds that "the idea of general ownership of the Caspian would not appeal to foreign investors who have already signed contracts with one of the five coastal states".<sup>165</sup>

To prove its point Kazakhstan tried to appeal both to international legal practice with regard to frontier lakes, and to the particular practice that had developed in the USSR and Iran. Recent statements and publications by Gizzatov centred on the argument that the Caspian legal regime provided for *de facto* division of the sea. In an article he asserted that "the coastal states' practice proves the *de facto* division of the Caspian between Russia and Iran". To substantiate his point Gizzatov noted that neither the USSR nor Iran had consulted each other when they started prospecting for oil on the Caspian shelf. "If there was a condominium, one could have expected consultations with co-owner Iran, but no such consultations took place... This practice unambiguously proves that neither the Soviet Union nor Iran regarded the Caspian's mineral resources as an object of common ownership".<sup>166</sup> The force of this argument is, however, undermined by the fact that the Russian position was based, as was shown, on the principle of "common use", not "common ownership". Russian interpretation of "common use" from the outset rejected the notion of condominium, despite Gizzatov's attempts to prove otherwise. As explained by Khodakov, the 1921 and 1940 treaties "contained no provision establishing any joint ownership, or extending national jurisdiction of the USSR and Iran, separately, or jointly, over the Caspian. For both states the Caspian, apart from the 10-mile exclusive fishing zone, was, in legal terms, territory beyond their national jurisdiction, where they had equal rights to its utilisation".<sup>167</sup>

Another argument used by Gizzatov entailed citing various internal documents of Soviet ministries which he contended established *de facto* division of

<sup>163</sup> Kazakhstan Denies US Pressure Over Caspian's Legal Status, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 28.07.95.

<sup>164</sup> Itogi vtorogo soveschaniya rukovoditeley pravovykh sluzhb MID prikaspiyskikh gosudarstv po voprosam pravovogo statusa kaspiyskogo morya // *Diplomaticheskii kurier* (Almaty), No.1, 1996, p. 93.

<sup>165</sup> Reuters News Service, 26.09.95.

<sup>166</sup> Gizzatov, V., *Pravovoy status Kaspiyskogo morya: kondominium ili delimitatsiya* // *Kazakhstan i mirovoe soobshchestvo*, No.1, 1996, p. 44.

<sup>167</sup> Khodakov, A., *The Legal Framework for Regional Cooperation in the Caspian Sea Region* // *Central Asian Quarterly*, Vol.2, No.3, 1995, p. 31.

the sea. One such document was the USSR Ministry of Oil Industry's 1970 decision to divide the Soviet part of the Caspian between Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan "on the centre line basis accepted in international practice". As if anticipating possible objections, Gizzatov claimed that such an "administrative decision" could have international legal consequences because "in the former USSR borders had an administrative and territorial character and later, after the USSR's collapse, were mutually recognised by the new independent states as inter-state borders". This position became government policy in Kazakhstan, and Nazarbayev referred to it at a press conference after the CIS summit in Moscow in March 1997.<sup>168</sup>

In practice, allusion in the Caspian Sea dispute to the administrative nature of the former USSR borders was no more than verbal acrobatics, linking without any logical reason two notions, "administrative borders" and "administrative decision". Administrative borders between republics in the former USSR could not be established by administrative decision. They were established or changed only by the highest legislative authority, the USSR Supreme Soviet. And it never passed any law dividing the Caspian into republican sectors. USSR Ministries could make internal administrative orders, for example for economic purposes, but these were binding only within a ministry's sphere of competence, and could not have international legal consequences. Overall, Kazakh diplomacy failed to establish a position from which it could force Russia into making substantial concessions.

In early 1996 the Kazakh leadership tried to use Yeltsin's interest in securing Almaty's support in the Russian presidential race for extracting concessions on the Caspian issue. The topic was raised during Yeltsin's visit to Almaty on 27 April 1996, and a joint Russian-Kazakh statement signed after the visit said that completing a Caspian Sea convention was "top priority and an urgent task". The statement allowed for each to carry out exploration in its own waters, and called for the signing of a consensus-based convention respecting "sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence".<sup>169</sup> Though it was obvious from the text that Yeltsin did not yield on any questions of principle, the Kazakhs hastened to turn the document's wording to advantage. At a news conference in Almaty on 30 April, Gizzatov said that Russia had opposed offshore seismic work carried out by Kazakhstan and Western oil companies in Kazakhstan's waters as "illegal and unilateral", but that both parties now recognised it as legal and were ready to cooperate.<sup>170</sup> In the interests of political expediency, Yeltsin for the time being refrained from refuting these assertions.

But after winning re-election, Yeltsin lost interest in courting Nazarbayev, and toughness returned to Russia's position. Two meetings of the five Caspian states, in Teheran on 24 October 1996, and in Ashgabat on 12 November 1996 produced no noticeable results. The communique of the Ashgabat meeting barely

<sup>168</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 01.04.97.

<sup>169</sup> Reuters News Service, 30.04.96.

<sup>170</sup> *Kazakhstan Seeks Cooperation with Russia in Caspian Development*, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 03.05.96.



went beyond repeating that a convention on the Caspian Sea's legal status was "priority and an urgent task", but did establish a working group, to meet regularly so as to speed up the negotiating process. Russian Foreign Minister Primakov proposed as a compromise to recognise a 45-nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone, much larger than initially envisaged by Moscow, and indicated Russia's willingness to accept other coastal states' jurisdiction over oil sites outside the 45-mile zone, under certain criteria to be defined by experts, and provided they were already being or were about to be developed.<sup>171</sup> Obviously, the major "criteria" would be whether or not Russian companies were involved in the "development".

Shortly before the meeting Russia scored an important diplomatic victory by attracting Turkmenistan into its camp. A separate meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Russia, Iran and Turkmenistan signed a memorandum agreeing to cooperate in development of Caspian mineral resources and to establish for this purpose a tripartite joint company before the end of 1996.<sup>172</sup> Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister Shikhmuradov said that Russia, Iran and Turkmenistan had agreed on a 45-mile national limit, inside which they would have exclusive rights to oil or gas, and the remaining area in the middle of the Caspian would be common territory. Explaining Turkmenistan's position, Shikhmuradov said suggestions that the former Soviet republics could go it alone without Russian and Iranian agreement were unrealistic.<sup>173</sup>

Nevertheless Almaty adhered to its position, and declined to accept Russia's compromise offer. Addressing a news conference after the Ashgabat meeting, Gizzatov said that "fundamental differences" over the legal status of the Caspian Sea still remained, that Primakov's proposals were "unpolished", but his government would study them carefully, and that "Almaty does not reject them, but this does not mean that it will accept them either".<sup>174</sup>

Russia's proposals were unacceptable to Kazakhstan, because the just-completed seismic survey of its Caspian shelf indicated estimated reserves of 10 billion tonnes of oil and 2 trillion m<sup>3</sup> of gas.<sup>175</sup> These were great deposits, but not in the category of "being or about to be developed". Gizzatov made it clear that "differences between the Caspian states and lack of a convention on the Caspian Sea's legal status will not deter Kazakhstan from exploring its resources".<sup>176</sup> He also criticised the tripartite memorandum, and announced that Kazakhstan opposed the creation of the company and had no intention of joining it. He disclosed that the memorandum was "initially formulated to extend the company's activities all over the sea", but "as a result of talks, we managed to limit this area to the coastal zone of the three countries signing the memorandum...The company will not

<sup>171</sup> Foreign Ministers of Caspian States Sign Communique, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 14.11.96.

<sup>172</sup> Reuters News Service, 13.11.96.

<sup>173</sup> Financial Times, 23.01.97.

<sup>174</sup> Kazakhstan Says "Fundamental Differences" Remain over Caspian Status, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 16.11.96.

<sup>175</sup> Lloyd's List, 09.09.96.

<sup>176</sup> Kazakhstan Says "Fundamental Differences" Remain over Caspian Status, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 16.11.96.

operate where Azerbaijan's and Kazakhstan's own work is under way".<sup>177</sup> However, Russia's real intentions regarding the company are not known. It is quite likely that the idea of a tripartite company to operate throughout the Caspian was generated simply to apply pressure to Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan.

On 18 December 1996 at a meeting in Moscow, delegations from Russia, Iran and Turkmenistan resolved to form a special committee to accelerate the establishment of a joint company to prospect for and develop oil and gas reserves in the Caspian Sea countries.<sup>178</sup> After that, obviously with Russian support, Turkmenistan claimed part of the Kyapaz/Serdar Caspian oilfield, which the Azerbaijan State Oil Company SOCAR intended to develop.<sup>179</sup> Baku had decided to develop it several years previously, and until then Ashgabat had never contested its right to do so. Though the claim was aimed at Baku, it had direct repercussions for Kazakhstan, because it introduced an element of instability into the whole Caspian basin, undermining business confidence.

Almaty saw all the disadvantages that Turkmenistan's changed position brought to Kazakhstan's diplomatic stance on the Caspian issue. Nazarbayev invited President Niyazov to Almaty for confidential talks. They took place on 27 February 1997, and the Caspian Sea issue was at the centre of the discussion. But Nazarbayev failed to persuade Niyazov to reverse his stance. The most he managed to extract was a joint declaration that "the sides recognise each other's right and the right of each of the coastal states to prospect for mineral resources on the Caspian seabed".<sup>180</sup> This provision added nothing new, because clearly every coastal state had rights for exploitation of the seabed.

The declaration did not address the major controversy, concerning the geographical limits within which such unilateral exploitation was permissible. Niyazov neither abandoned his commitment to the Russian proposal, nor withdrew his claim to the disputed part of the Kyapaz/Serdar oilfield. Yeltsin rewarded Turkmenistan for its cooperation by cancelling Rosneft's and LUKoil's deal with SOCAR for joint exploitation of the Kyapaz/Serdar field.<sup>181</sup> On 22 May 1997 a meeting of the working group on defining the Caspian's legal status took place in Almaty. All littoral states attended, but once again failed to achieve any tangible results.<sup>182</sup>

Despite its inability to push through its version of the Caspian Sea settlement, Moscow could at least be satisfied that its policy effectively prevented Kazakhstan from acquiring energy independence. In fact the Kazakh leadership

<sup>177</sup> Reuters News Service, 14.11.96; Kazakhstan Says "Fundamental Differences" Remain over Caspian Status, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 16.11.96.

<sup>178</sup> Russia, Turkmenistan and Iran Take Steps to Set up Joint Oil Company, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 21.12.96.

<sup>179</sup> Financial Times, 23.01.97.

<sup>180</sup> Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 28.02.97.

<sup>181</sup> RFE/RL Newsline Vol.1, No.89, Part I, 06.08.97.

<sup>182</sup> Working Group to Determine Legal Status of the Caspian, ITAR-TASS World Service, 22.05.97.

failed to reach any of the proclaimed targets in its energy policy. The following table shows the dynamics of Kazakhstan's gas production in 1991-1996.

**Table 6.1**  
**Gas production in Kazakhstan (in millions m<sup>3</sup>)<sup>183</sup>**

1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
7885	8113	6685	4490	5900	6400

Thus gas production in Kazakhstan not only fell far short of domestic demand of 16.1 billion m<sup>3</sup> but remained below the levels achieved in the last years of the USSR. Kazakhstan continues to import gas in large quantities. In 1994 it imported 7.56 billion m<sup>3</sup>,<sup>184</sup> but in 1995 this fell to 4.27 billion m<sup>3</sup>, because of inability to pay. As a result gas consumption in 1995 reached a record low of 7.5 billion m<sup>3</sup>, little more than half normal domestic demand,<sup>185</sup> with negative effects on industrial production and households. Yet Kazakhstan cannot cut its gas imports to zero, at least until the projected Karachaganak-Akmola gas pipeline is built.

Kazakhstan is still forced to export its gas from Karachaganak to Orenburg at exceptionally low prices. For example, in 1995 Gazprom took 3 billion m<sup>3</sup> of Karachaganak gas but paid only 10 months later, at less than the Russian domestic price.<sup>186</sup> N.Balgimbayev, when still in charge of the Kazakh State Oil company, complained that Kazakhstan received a mere 17 cents "change" on each dollar equivalent in the course of such operations. The rest is eaten up by exorbitant tariffs, product regrading, etc. In other words, Kazakhstan is forced to sell Karachaganak's products at well below their true value.<sup>187</sup>

Thus despite its substantial gas reserves, Kazakhstan has not only failed to become a significant exporter of natural gas, but remains dependent on gas imports from Russia. The Duma's Committee on Property, Privatisation and Economic Activity estimated that "Kazakhstan's dependence on Russia will remain not only in immediate but in middle-term perspective, because with its vast but still unused gas deposits it will import 17 billion cubic metres of gas per year from Russia, at least until the year 2000".<sup>188</sup> The latest manifestation of this dependence was the conclusion of an agreement with Gazprom to supply Almaty and southern regions of Kazakhstan with Russian gas. Kazakhstan had to turn to Russia, because

<sup>183</sup> Sources: Kazakhstan: Transition of the State, A World Bank Country Study, Washington: World Bank, 1997, p. 228; Sodruzhestvo Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv v 1996 godu, Statisticheskiy ezhegodnik, Moscow: 1997, pp. 47-48.

<sup>184</sup> Petroleum Economist, January 1996, P. 6.

<sup>185</sup> Kazakhstan: Transition of the State, A World Bank Country Study, Washington: World Bank, 1997, p. 230.

<sup>186</sup> APS Review Gas Market Trends, 15.07.96.

<sup>187</sup> Izvestiya, 05.05.97.

<sup>188</sup> Gosudarstvennaya Duma Federal'nogo Sobraniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Komitet po sobstvennosti, privatizatsii i khozyaystvennoy deyatel'nosti, Zaklyuchenie po proektu Federal'nogo zakona "O ratifikatsii Dogovora o dalneyshem uglublenii ekonomicheskogo sotrudnichestva i integratsii Rossiyskoy Federatsii i Respubliki Kazakhstan", Moscow [No publisher] 19.04.95.

Turkmenistan terminated gas supplies in late September 1997, and Kazakhstan cannot transport its own gas to the south of the country.<sup>189</sup>

The situation was only slightly better in Kazakhstan's oil industry. The following table shows the dynamics of Kazakhstan's oil production in 1991-1996.

**Table 6.2**  
**Oil production in Kazakhstan (in millions of tonnes)<sup>190</sup>**

1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
26.6	25.8	23.0	20.3	20.5	23

The table shows that despite reversing the negative trend of declining oil production, the republic still produces less oil than in the last years of the USSR.<sup>191</sup> Moreover, oil production fell far short of the 33.5 million tons planned for 1995.<sup>192</sup> The Atirau-Kumkol internal oil pipeline has still not been built Kazakhstan's domestic market therefore remains heavily dependent on Russia for imports of crude for the Pavlodar and Shymkent refineries, or of processed oil products. Unfortunately figures for imports of the latter are unavailable, but as on 1 March 1995 Kazakhstan's debt to Russia for oil supplies amounted to 136.8 billion roubles.<sup>193</sup>

In 1995 Kazakhstan's oil export amounted to 11.2 million tons.<sup>194</sup> In 1996 it increased slightly to 12.3 million, but this too was far less than the 21.1 million tons exported in 1990.<sup>195</sup> Moreover, the bulk of it remains dependent on Russia's goodwill. Russia thwarted the possibility of alternative pipeline routes from Kazakhstan, thus perpetuating Russian control over the flow of oil from the republic. In 1997 Kazakhstan planned to export seven million tons of oil through a pipeline across Russia, and one million each by tankers across the Caspian to Baku, through swaps with Iran, and by rail through Russia to Europe.<sup>196</sup> This means that 80% of Kazakhstan's oil exports continue to transit Russian territory, and this dependency on Russia is unlikely to disappear in the foreseeable future. Currently the CPC remains the only projected new export pipeline, but even it still did not enter the phase of practical implementation due to new problems connected with

<sup>189</sup> Russia Starts Gas Supplies to South Kazakhstan, ITAR-TASS World Service, 15.11.97; Russian Gas "Slap in Face" for Kazakhs, Paper Says, BBC Monitoring Service: Former USSR, 21.11.97.

<sup>190</sup> Sources: Kazakhstan: Transition of the State, A World Bank Country Study, Washington: World Bank, 1997, p. 228; Sodruzhestvo Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv v 1996 godu, Statisticheskii ezhegodnik, Moscow: 1997, pp. 47-48.

<sup>191</sup> Kazakhstan: Transition of the State, A World Bank Country Study, Washington: World Bank, 1997, p. 228; Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 14.08.97.

<sup>192</sup> Reuters News Service, 02.11.92.

<sup>193</sup> Ministerstvo Finansov Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Po voprosu finansovo-kreditnykh otnosheniy s Respublikoy Kazakhstan, Doc. No.1-10/2-1229, Moscow [No publisher] 1995.

<sup>194</sup> Kazakhstan: Transition of the State, A World Bank Country Study, Washington: World Bank, 1997, p. 230.

<sup>195</sup> Kazakhstanskaya pravda, 14.08.97.

<sup>196</sup> Reuters News Service, 03.04.97.

inability to agree on transit fees with local authorities in the Russian provinces through which it will pass.

Of course Kazakhstan has not abandoned its efforts to find alternative energy transportation routes. This was clearly reaffirmed by Nazarbayev in his address to the nation in October 1997, when he said "The second element of our strategy is creation of a pipeline system for export of oil and gas. Only a large number of independent export routes can prevent our dependence on any one neighbour and monopoly price dependence on any one consumer".<sup>197</sup> But so far Almaty is still unable to find a solution to this problem.

On 11 August 1996 representatives from the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and the Kazakh government signed a two million-tonne annual oil swap deal.<sup>198</sup> The first trial shipment of 70,000 tonnes of Kazakh oil to Iran took place in March 1997. It went badly, because the Teheran refinery could not process it, even after its high mercaptan content was removed, primarily since it was of a type unsuitable for the refinery's elderly technology.<sup>199</sup> Shipments to Iran had to be interrupted. Only on 17 November 1997 did Ali Majedi, Iran's Deputy Minister for Caspian Sea Oil and Gas, announce that Iran was prepared to resume oil swaps with Kazakhstan, after reduction of the high level of impurities in Kazakh crude.<sup>200</sup> But even if the swaps are renewed, their actual volume will be very insignificant, and dependent both on northern Iran's refinery capacity, and on Iran's domestic demand.

Another route, called the "Caucasian corridor", entails trans-Caspian transit in tankers, and rail transport through Azerbaijan and Georgia to the Black Sea ports of Batumi and Poti. Chevron planned to transport 1.2 million tonnes of oil by this route in 1997. In March 1997 the first two trainloads, carrying 5,000 tonnes of Kazakh oil, were loaded into a tanker and sent to Europe from Georgia.<sup>201</sup> Nazarbayev claims that after modernisation of the Caspian port of Aktau Kazakhstan will export 5-6 million tonnes of oil annually by this route.<sup>202</sup> Two factors, however, militate against the economic viability of the "Caucasian corridor". The first is that transshipments from tanker to rail and vice versa are time-consuming and costly. The second is the limited capacity of the Georgian rail network, which may prove unable to handle a large regular oil traffic, and could certainly not cope with output which, according to official Kazakh predictions, will reach 170 million tonnes by 2010.<sup>203</sup>

Not surprisingly, during Azerbaijan's President Aliyev's visit to Almaty on 10 June 1997 he and Nazarbayev proposed a plan for a trans-Caspian pipeline to Azerbaijan, which would enable Kazakhstan to increase its oil deliveries to 10

<sup>197</sup> Nazarbayev, N., *Kazakhstan - 2030: protsvetanie, bezopasnost' i uluchshenie blagosostoyaniya kazakhstantsev*, Poslanie Prezidenta strany narodu Kazakhstana // *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 11.10.97, p. 24.

<sup>198</sup> Reuters News Service, 12.08.96.

<sup>199</sup> *New Europe*, 27 April - 3 May 1997, p. 42.

<sup>200</sup> *Iran Renews Call for Caspian Sea Legal Regime*, *Compass Middle East Wire*, 17.11.97.

<sup>201</sup> *InterFax*, 13.03.97.

<sup>202</sup> Reuters News Service, 11.11.97.

<sup>203</sup> Reuters News Service, 10.08.97.

million tonnes a year, and signed a memorandum on cooperation in oil deliveries to international markets.<sup>204</sup> Nazarbayev discussed the same plan with Georgia's President Shevaradnadze when he visited Almaty on 11 November 1997.<sup>205</sup> However, the economic and political viability of such a pipeline remains to be seen, primarily because of failure to define the Caspian Sea's legal status.

In the second half of 1997 three factors substantially intensified the diplomatic struggle around Kazakhstan's energy resources. The first was China's entry into the game. On 4 June 1997 the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) beat off rival bids from the United States and Russia in the auction of a 60% share of Aktobemunaigaz.<sup>206</sup> On 24 September Nazarbayev and Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng signed agreements on cooperation in the oil and gas sector, and between the Kazakh Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources and CNPC. China obtained concessions to three hydrocarbon deposits in Aktyubinsk region and the Uzen oilfield on the Mangyshlak peninsula, second only to the Tengiz oilfield. Implementation of the Aktyubinsk project will require construction of a 3,000 km pipeline to Xinjiang, China's most westerly province. Under the Uzen project, a 250 km pipeline will be built to the northern border of Iran. The Uzen project and construction of the pipelines are estimated to cost \$US 9.5 billion.<sup>207</sup>

It was no accident that provisions for pipeline construction found their way into the Kazakh-Chinese agreements. Almaty counted on solving its oil and gas transportation problems in this way, both to refineries in the East and for exports to international markets, by-passing Russia. This move also corresponded with Nazarbayev's strategy of balancing between the various poles of power, and manifested his intention to avoid slipping into a new foreign policy dependence, this time on the West. However, from the point of view of diversification of Kazakhstan's oil exports this success can be regarded only as limited. The 3,000 km pipeline to Xinjiang will require some time to build, and China will be building it for its own oil consumption. To turn it into an export pipeline to world markets will require building another section of the pipeline to Chinese ports. It will have to be at least as long as the first one through Kazakhstan. To what extent China may be interested in committing its resources to such an enterprise remains unknown. Nothing in recent Chinese statements suggests that at this stage it is contemplating such a possibility. On the other hand, a pipeline through Iran, build with Chinese investments, might be a viable alternative for diversification of Kazakh oil exports to international markets.

<sup>204</sup> Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan Sign 15 Cooperation Agreements, ITAR-TASS World Service, 10.06.97; *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 12.06.98.

<sup>205</sup> *Kazakhstanskaya pravda*, 12.11.98.

<sup>206</sup> Aktobemunaigaz, based in western Kazakhstan controls two fields with reserves of 590 million tons of petroleum and 220 billion cubic meters of gas. In 1996 its oil output was 2.6 million tonnes. In the assessment of Chinese experts this output can be doubled by the projected \$US 300 million of Chinese investments. [China's National Oil Corporation Wins Deal to Develop Kazakh Oil Field, BBC Monitoring Service: Asia-Pacific, 06.6.97].

<sup>207</sup> Kazakhstan and China Sign "Deal of the Century", ITAR-TASS World Service, 24.09.97.

The second factor was the growth of American involvement in Caspian Sea politics. A State Department report released in April 1997 recommended increased support for US energy companies' activities in the Caspian Basin. Emphasising the region's rich oil and gas reserves, the report said the US government "needs to enhance its efforts throughout the region to support American companies...and continue to bring US companies to this market". To try to develop alternative routes to the Bosphorus, the report called for encouraging market development in the Black Sea region to build the infrastructure to transport Caspian energy to other markets.<sup>208</sup>

Washington redoubled its efforts to push through the concept of the so-called Eurasian Transportation Corridor, a major oil export pipeline running from Kazakhstan to Azerbaijan on the Caspian seabed, then through Georgia to Turkey. In early November 1997 US Secretary of Energy Pena led a mission from the Departments of Energy, State and Commerce to the countries in the Caspian region, where it met the leaders of Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Georgia. Pena actively propagated a plan for an East-West pipeline route from Baku to Ceyhan in Turkey, and stated after the visit that Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkmenistan had endorsed the proposal.<sup>209</sup> This was a direct challenge to Russian influence and strategy in the Caspian Sea basin.

During Nazarbayev's visit to Washington on 17-18 November 1997, the issue of Caspian energy development was discussed extensively in several meetings, including with Clinton, Vice-President Gore, Energy Secretary Pena, and Acting Secretary of State Talbott. Both sides agreed on the importance of giving priority to developing a secure Eurasian Transportation Corridor with trans-Caspian segments as one of multiple pipelines to deliver Kazakhstan energy resources to world markets. Nazarbayev agreed to establishment of a working group, and Gore, who led the US side in the talks, told a press conference that he was satisfied that Nazarbayev had made his support for the transport corridor clear.<sup>210</sup> Nazarbayev's endorsement was important for Washington, because it was aimed not only at undermining Russian influence, but also at isolating Iran. On every occasion American officials stressed that Iran must be excluded from pipeline projects in Central Asia and the Caspian basin.

In its turn Washington fully supported Kazakhstan's position on dividing the Caspian Sea into national sectors as a counter to Russian-Iranian advocacy of the "common use" principle. The joint statement by Clinton and Nazarbayev especially emphasised the "need to adopt a Caspian Sea legal regime that establishes a clear division of property rights based on the division of seabed resources".<sup>211</sup> Gore was conspicuously present at the signing of an agreement between Kazakhstankaspiyshelf and Agip, British Gas, British Petroleum, Mobil,

<sup>208</sup> Reuters News Service, 02.05.97.

<sup>209</sup> Pena Wins Support for Oil Transport Corridor, File ID:97111808.GWE, 18.11.97.

<sup>210</sup> US-Kazakhstan Joint Statement on Caspian Energy, File ID:97111903.GWE, USIA Database, 19.11.97; Gore, Nazarbayev Expand US-Kazakh Nuclear and Defense Cooperation, File ID:97111811.GWE, 18.11.97.

<sup>211</sup> Joint Statement on US-Kazakhstan Relations, November 18, File ID:97111807.GWE, USIA Database, 18.11.97.

Shell, Statoil and Total on prospecting and drilling in an area of the Caspian shelf covering some 6,000 square km in the north-east of the Caspian, part of which had been claimed by Russia.<sup>212</sup> Gore's presence was meant to demonstrate strong American support not only for the deal, but also for Kazakhstan's position of dividing the Caspian into national sectors. Undoubtedly American support substantially strengthened Kazakhstan's position vis-a-vis Russia in the Caspian dispute. However, it remains to be seen to what extent this support can change the balance of forces in the region.

Having initially planned to create an "equilibrium of forces" Nazarbayev is now risking being caught in the cross-fire. There have already been signs that he is retracting promises he made during his visit to Washington about the Eurasian Transportation Corridor and relations with Iran.<sup>213</sup> On the other hand, China's entry into the game improved Russia's diplomatic position vis-a-vis the USA. Until recently Russia could rely only on the support of Iran among the larger players. Now it can forge ad hoc alliances with Beijing to counter American pressure. It is already clear that some of China's interests in the Caspian are in contradiction with those of the US, primarily with regard to oil shipments through Iran, since Washington categorically objects against pipeline projects going through Iranian territory.

The third factor was that in the second half of 1997 Russia sharply raised the stakes in the struggle for control of the Caspian. In August, Russia's Natural Resources Ministry announced a tender for the right to explore a vast area in the northern Caspian, estimated to hold anywhere between 150 and 600 million tonnes of recoverable oil. A part of the area put to tender overlaps that sector of the Caspian which Kazakhstan considers its own. Almaty reacted harshly. The Foreign Ministry expressed "strong disagreement" with Russia's plans, pointed out the "inadmissibility of unilateral actions, uncoordinated with Kazakhstan but taken on its territory and the necessity to reconsider the decision", and stated "From the location of the blocks put up in the tender it is clear that some of them are in Kazakhstan's sector of the Caspian Sea".<sup>214</sup>

During Chernomyrdin's visit to Almaty on 4 October, disagreements on the Caspian were a major topic in his discussions with Nazarbayev, but neither convinced the other. Soon after Chernomyrdin's return to Moscow, a senior Russian Foreign Ministry official said Kazakhstan's position "is, to say the least, inaccurate... There have never been any borders in the Caspian Sea legalised via treaties," and "the tender conditions will include terms requiring the winner to adhere to any agreements that may be reached thereafter, including adjustments to sector boundaries".<sup>215</sup> On 10 December LUKoil was named winner of the tender.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 20.11.97.

<sup>213</sup> *Journal of Commerce*, 01.12.97.

<sup>214</sup> Reuters News Service, 30.08.97; Reuters News Service, 24.01.98

<sup>215</sup> Reuters news service, 18.10.97.

<sup>216</sup> RFE/RL Newsline Vol 1, No. 177, Part I, 11.12.97.



Interestingly, the Russian tender coincided with one called by Turkmenistan. But if the Russian tender targeted Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan's targeted Azerbaijan. Both tenders were presumably a coordinated action designed to weaken the Azeri-Kazakh axis. A few days after meeting Yeltsin, who described the Russian and Turkmen positions as "quite close", Niyazov suddenly invited tenders for oil and gas fields on Turkmenistan's Caspian shelf. Ashgabat's plans envisaged exploiting the disputed Kyapaz/Serdar field together with the National Iranian Oil Company and an unnamed Russian company.<sup>217</sup> The first two rounds of the tender were held on 10-11 September and Turkmen sources claimed that they attracted "more than 57 major foreign companies". This caused an angry reaction in Azerbaijan, SOCAR even issuing a statement threatening unspecified reprisals against any Western oil companies that tendered for the disputed Kyapaz/Serdar field. Moreover, Turkmenistan reaffirmed its claims on the Chirag and Azeri fields, developed by a BP-led consortium, insisting that the Azerbaijani government give it a share of the profits.<sup>218</sup> On 19 November 1997 Turkmenistan lodged an appeal with the UN for assistance in settling its dispute with Azerbaijan over ownership of the Kyapaz/Serdar oilfield.<sup>219</sup>

Given the present correlation of forces in the Caspian basin, it is unlikely that the dispute will be resolved in Kazakhstan's favour. Up to now the Russian government has demonstrated no intention of retreating from its initial stance. Quite the opposite, there are signs that Russia intends to be a more active player. On 21 November 1997 Russian deputy Prime Minister Nemtsov, speaking at the presentation of new Minister for Oil and Gas Industry S.Kiriyenko, said that Russia "must in no way allow our influence in the Caspian region to weaken".<sup>220</sup>

The most probable scenario is that negotiations will drag on indefinitely, a prospect quite suitable to Moscow. Unlike Kazakhstan, Russia is not interested in speedy clarification of the Caspian's legal status. Uncertainty in no way obligates Russia, nor deprives it of freedom of diplomatic manoeuvre, nor does it prevent Russian participation in various profitable projects exploiting Caspian energy resources. Primakov said that Russia does not fear the attraction of American capital to develop oil fields in the Caspian Sea. "Russian capital also participates in their development and we plan to continue our participation".<sup>221</sup> Moscow is not inclined to rely on the Kazakhs' word, that they would like to see Russian companies take part in developing Kazakhstan's Caspian shelf. Were the legal status of the Caspian settled to Kazakhstan's satisfaction, Almaty would be free to go back on its promises. Russia can lose the struggle in the Caspian only if it becomes completely isolated from all the other littoral states, and if they form a US-backed coalition against Moscow. But at present such a scenario appears highly unlikely.

<sup>217</sup> RFE/RL Newline Vol.1, No.98, Part I, 19.08.97; RFE/RL Newline Vol.1, No.103, Part I, 26.08.97.

<sup>218</sup> RFE/RL Newline Vol.1, No.111, Part I, 05.09.97; RFE/RL Newline Vol.1, No.115, Part I, 11.09.97; RFE/RL Newline Vol.1, No.118, Part I, 16.09.97; RFE/RL Newline Vol.1, No.120, Part I, 18.09.97.

<sup>219</sup> RFE/RL Newline Vol.1, No.164, Part I, 20.11.97.

<sup>220</sup> Reuter News Service, 21.11.98.

<sup>221</sup> ITAR-TASS, 24.05.97.

## CONCLUSIONS

The emergence of independent Kazakhstan was a result of objective processes predetermined by the creation and consolidation of Kazakh statehood within the former USSR and by the formation of a powerful Kazakh national elite. By the mid-1980's it had established firm control over Kazakhstan's domestic affairs, and acquired the potential to make a bid for full independence. Gorbachev's attempt to reassert central control met with resistance, including violent riots on the streets of Alma-Ata in December 1996. After suppression of the riots, the Kazakh elite temporarily retreated, waiting for a suitable opportunity to re-establish control. The opportunity arrived when the rise of ethnic nationalism engulfed the USSR, including Russia, which opted for more autonomy from the central government.

Nazarbayev, a new leader of the Kazakh elite, played the major role in guiding his republic to independence. He was not a passive follower of the course of events leading to the USSR's disintegration, but an active initiator of various political combinations undermining the power of its central government. By exploiting the antagonism between Yeltsin and Gorbachev Nazarbayev managed on the one hand to accumulate a substantial number of new powers in preparing Kazakhstan's independence, and on the other to neutralise Russian separatists in northern areas of Kazakhstan, who called for unification of those areas with Russia.

While striving for independence Nazarbayev at the same time wanted to preserve some sort of a loose confederation or economic union, which would not have imposed any strict obligations on Almaty's domestic and foreign policies, but would provide privileged access to the vast post-Soviet market, and to the transportation system for export of natural resources. Besides, Kazakhstan wanted to maintain a defence union which would allow it to participate in decision-making on vital military and strategic issues, while avoiding large expenditures on creating and maintaining its own armed forces. The USSR's breakup frustrated these plans.

In the first months after independence the dynamics of Russian-Kazakh relations were determined by three sets of factors: the historical legacy, the Kazakh elite's vision of Kazakhstan as a nation-state, and the necessity to divide the assets and responsibilities of the former Union. Disagreements and conflicting interests identified themselves at an early stage. The main problem which Moscow and Almaty had to tackle was the position of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan. Moscow tried to use Kazakhstan's economic dependence on Russia as a leverage for drawing the republic into bilateral agreements which included obligations towards the rights and freedoms of ethnic Russians. But the Kazakh side, through subtle diplomatic manoeuvring, managed to avoid undertaking any precise obligations.

At a later stage various elements in Kazakhstan's policy of nation-state building acquired anti-Russian overtones. The policy pursued two goals: making Kazakhs the dominant nationality by concentrating all the major levers of political

and economic power in their hands, and eradicating the remaining levers of internal Russian influence on Kazakhstan's policy. In public the Kazakh authorities denied the existence of ethnic bias in their policies, and portrayed Kazakhstan as a multinational state, in which all citizens had equal rights. But their practical actions indicated otherwise.

The policy of nation-state building had a dual effect on the Russian population. On the one hand, it caused a massive emigration of those Russians who had no close ties with the republic, and on the other, it forced consolidation of the other part of the Russian community, who perceived the land where they lived as their own. This resulted in the emergence of Russian community organisations which began a political struggle against official policy, and also lobbied the Russian government to take a stance on the issue of ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan.

The implications of the Kazakh policy of nation-state building caused concern in Moscow. This was not exclusively the result of complaints by Kazakhstan's Russian activists. For Russia important strategic interests were at stake. The presence of a large Russian community in Kazakhstan, and its broad representation in government, public service and the economy were regarded by Moscow as insurance of the republic's loyalty in strategic perspective. Attitudes to ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan became the main criteria by which the real, not declared, intentions of the Kazakh leadership were judged.

Hence Moscow's insistence on a "dual citizenship" agreement covering ethnic Russians, which could legitimise Russian military intervention in case of need. For the time being Kazakhstan managed to avoid entering into such a commitment. Moscow also provided political and diplomatic support for Russian community activists and organisations in Kazakhstan, and encouraged their cooperation with Kazakh democratic opposition groups.

The non-Kazakh population's opposition to the policy of nation-state building, and the growth of internal Kazakh opposition, made it difficult for Nazarbayev's regime to operate in a democratic political environment. Unification of even a small part of the Kazakh electorate with all the Russian-speaking electorate could inevitably give them victory in parliamentary and presidential elections. This stimulated the evolution of Nazarbayev's regime towards authoritarian rule, and intensification of repression and obstruction against all forms of opposition, reinforcing Russian suspicions about Nazarbayev's real intentions.

There are clear indications that for the foreseeable future the problem of Kazakhstan's Russians will remain the major issue in Russian-Kazakh relations. The Kazakh leadership's hopes for an early resolution of the inter-ethnic situation to their satisfaction did not materialise. Besides obvious failures in the economic field, the government was unable to achieve a decisive demographic shift in favour of Kazakhs; Russians and other non-Kazakhs still make roughly half the republic's population, and in the north and north-east Russians are still the overwhelming majority. The potential for Russian areas to secede from Kazakhstan remains real.

An important indicator of the status of relations between Russia and Kazakhstan is the level of their cooperation in promoting integration within the CIS. Kazakhstan's attitude to integration was predetermined by its large-scale dependence on economic relations with other CIS states, especially Russia. From the very first days of independence Nazarbayev took a firm stance in favour of economic integration. However, his vision of integration did not go beyond satisfying Kazakhstan's immediate interests in foreign trade and defence. He wanted such integration without making any concessions on Kazakhstan's sovereignty or the role of its Russian community. Russia so distrusted Nazarbayev's intentions on economic integration that it pushed Kazakhstan out of the rouble zone.

Moscow in its turn did not want integration with former Russian dependencies on equal terms. It had no intention to see its policy subordinated to some supra-national structure, controlled by other CIS countries, diminishing Russia's own role in the CIS and in the international context. The only arrangement suitable to Moscow would be acceptance of its own terms, while Nazarbayev's proposals ran contrary to this.

Despite these basic differences in approach to CIS integration both Yeltsin and Nazarbayev actively used pro-integration rhetoric and declarative initiatives to further their domestic policies. Yeltsin applied this tactic in the struggle against parliamentary opposition. Nazarbayev played up to the aspirations of Kazakhstan's Slavic population, trying to make them more tolerant towards his nation-state building policy.

Nazarbayev's most prominent initiative, the concept of a Eurasian Union (EAU), had only semantic relevance to the ideology of Eurasianism. It avoided addressing the issue of common Eurasian nationalism, the basis of the whole Eurasianist concept. Besides being designed to appeal to Kazakhstan's Russians, the proposal was motivated by Nazarbayev's desire to take their problem off the agenda of Russian-Kazakh relations.

Kazakhstan's negative attitude to real integration demonstrated itself in its failure to observe its obligations within the Customs Union, and in its reaction to the conclusion of the Russian-Belarus Union Treaty. If not completely dead, the Customs Union is moribund. Not only did the union become dysfunctional, but both countries reinforced customs and border controls between them. The Kazakhstan leadership's stance on integration proved that it was not interested in real economic, much less political, union with Russia. Instead Kazakhstan's strategy consists in preserving its independence by balancing between the major centres of world power.

The prospects of real economic integration between Russia and Kazakhstan will depend on a multitude of factors. The most important of them is Russia's economic development. If Russia overcomes its present economic stagnation and achieves even moderate economic growth it will become a more attractive partner for Kazakhstan, and its own ability to stimulate the integration process economically will also increase. If at the same time Kazakhstan's economy shows

no signs of recovery, internal pressure for economic integration with Russia will grow, not only among Russians, but also among Kazakhs. A certain pressure for further integration may be created if the Russia-Belarus Union is clearly successful.

Russo-Kazakhstan relations within the CIS' collective security system were affected by similar problems. Moscow regarded this system, embodied in the Tashkent treaty, as an instrument for keeping Central Asia in its military sphere of influence. Almaty's attitude was motivated by immediate concerns - inability independently to provide for its own defence, and perception of a clear threat from instability in neighbouring Tajikistan. Almaty wanted Moscow to bear the burden of preventing the export of instability into the rest of Central Asia, but its pro term acceptance of Russian security patronage did not mean that it consented to perpetuation of Russia's military dominance of the region. Russian and Kazakh approaches to collective security in Central Asia were far from concurrent.

To diminish dependence on Russia as sole guarantor of Kazakhstan's security Nazarbayev started invoking various alternative collective security concepts for Central Asia, and also began diversifying Kazakhstan's military ties, including expanding its links with NATO, despite Moscow's obvious displeasure.

Bilateral Russian-Kazakh military relations were also characterised by major difficulties and tensions. The most pressing issue was that of control over the ex-Soviet nuclear weapons deployed in Kazakhstan. Almaty's reluctance to renounce them was caused by suspicion of Moscow's intentions with regard to Kazakhstan's territorial integrity. Kazakhstan wanted unequivocal security guarantees and perceived possession of nuclear weapons as means of obtaining them. Moscow in turn did not want nuclear-armed neighbours, who might challenge Russia's leadership in the post-Soviet space. To push Kazakhstan towards nuclear disarmament, Russia forged a temporary alliance with the USA, and their combined pressure forced Almaty to accept the status of a non-nuclear weapon state.

A subsequent diplomatic struggle between Moscow and Almaty was precipitated by Russia's intention to establish sole ownership of the former USSR's nuclear arsenal, while Kazakhstan insisted on its' being subordinate to the joint CIS command. Almaty perceived joint command of the nuclear forces as an instrument preventing possible Russian attempts to use military pressure or armed force against Kazakhstan, but Russia outmanoeuvred it, took sole control over CIS nuclear weapons, and quickly removed all such weapons from Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan in its turn failed to obtain any valid security guarantees from any other great power at the exception of Russia.

Another point of contradiction was the problem of Russian access to several important military and strategic installations in Kazakhstan, primarily the Baykonur cosmodrome. For Russia such access had a dual purpose. The first was economic, to escape the high costs of creating similar installations on Russian territory. The second was geopolitical, to retain a military presence in Kazakhstan. After long and painful negotiations Moscow and Almaty concluded a set of

agreements on military cooperation, including conditions for Russian use of these installations. However, some of these agreements remain only on paper, others are being fulfilled only partially, and the Russian military presence in Kazakhstan remains under constant propaganda fire.

Almaty's official claims that its relations with Moscow are a military alliance arouse serious doubts. Kazakhstan under its present leadership, is unlikely to be a reliable ally of Russia. Given Kazakh hostility to the Russian military presence, and Almaty's tactic of using Russian defence installations in Kazakhstan as a bargaining tool for concessions in other fields, Russia will further reduce its dependence on military-strategic installations in Kazakhstan, but is likely to attempt to retain at least a token military presence, as a manifestation of its military and strategic role in the region.

Soon after the USSR's collapse, Moscow found itself involved in a diplomatic struggle for Kazakhstan's energy resources. In the new geopolitical situation the role of these resources for Russia's CIS strategy increased substantially. Initially Russian policy was motivated by immediate economic concern, and attempted to neutralise Kazakhstan's competition for Western investment in energy projects in the former USSR. But later, with identification of Russia's new national interests, geopolitical considerations moved to the fore.

In Kazakhstan the government saw prompt development of the energy sector as the main prerequisite for the success of its policy of nation-state building. Almaty based its strategy on the premise that achievement of economic independence from Russia should start with acquiring energy independence. Besides, abundant revenues from exporting Kazakhstan's oil and gas could serve as an investment base for modernising other sectors of Kazakhstan's economy, making it more self-reliant and less dependent on Russia. Almaty put its stake on maximising the involvement of Western companies in its oil and gas sector, while cold-shouldering Russian firms.

Nazarbayev's plans were at odds not only with Russia's plans to stabilise its own oil industry, but with Moscow's strategic line of keeping Kazakhstan in its sphere of influence. Initially Russia attempted to draw Kazakhstan into a multilateral OPEC-style arrangement, which would force Almaty to consult with Moscow on issues of energy cooperation with the West. When this failed Moscow started to apply economic pressure.

The major lever in Russia's hands was control of the pipeline network for transporting Kazakhstan's hydrocarbons to world markets. Russia established a low annual quota for export of Kazakhstan's oil, and denied it any opportunity to export gas. To prevent Kazakhstan from initiating alternative pipeline projects circumventing Russian territory, Moscow drew Almaty into the CPC project, which is still unable to proceed.

Russia used its control over pipelines as an instrument of pressure for penetrating energy projects in Kazakhstan either started or about to start without Russian participation. This tactic brought some results, with Russian companies

being offered shares in the Tengiz, Karachaganak and some other smaller projects. Kazakhstan in its turn failed to overcome its energy dependence on Russia, and even less its dependence on Russia's transportation network for its hydrocarbon exports.

Russian diplomacy successfully exploited the uncertainty over the Caspian Sea's legal status, preventing a division into national sectors by which Moscow would have lost both economically and politically. The Russian sector's energy reserves would be substantially smaller than Kazakhstan's and Kazakhstan would have acquired sovereign rights in its sector, reducing Russia's ability to influence with whom and to what extent it would cooperate. The regime of "common use" advanced by Russia provided for joint exploitation of Caspian resources, an arrangement giving Moscow levers of influence on Kazakhstan's future energy policy.

Russia's policy met with strong opposition from the US and Turkey, which actively propagated plans for alternative pipelines by-passing Russian territory. Washington also supported Kazakhstan against Russia on the issue of the Caspian Sea legal regime. As a counter-move Russia proceeded to strengthen its diplomatic alliance with Iran on the Caspian issue, and managed to draw Turkmenistan into its camp. Under the present correlation of forces in the Caspian it is unlikely that the dispute will be solved to Kazakhstan's satisfaction. The most probable scenario is that negotiations will drag on indefinitely, a prospect viewed with equanimity in Moscow, which has no incentive to speedy clarification.

Overall, Russian-Kazakh relations in the post-Soviet period were characterised by extreme controversy, uneasiness and mutual suspicion. Despite concluding multiple agreements, the two states failed to create a solid basis for cooperation. At the core of the problem is the fact that Russia's and Kazakhstan's foreign policies are motivated by conflicting sets of interests. While Russia is interested in maintaining control of the post-Soviet space and keeping Kazakhstan within its sphere of influence, the Kazakh leaders' major aspiration is to construct a nation-state enjoying real, not nominal independence.

At present the delicate balance achieved in relations between the two countries rests primarily on personal relations between Yeltsin and Nazarbayev. However, it can be expected that after Yeltsin's retirement Russian policy towards Kazakhstan will acquire more defined traits, representing personal attitudes less and Russia's strategic objectives more. Arrival of new political forces to the leadership of Russia will not alter Moscow's already obvious thrust for a change in the status quo, but will affect the forms and tempo of change.

Nowadays Russian strategy towards Kazakhstan consists in drawing it gradually and gently into a closer relationship, with a long-term view to its incorporation in a new form of union. The ethnic composition of Kazakh society, the cultural legacy of its presence within the Russian state, its disadvantageous geographical position, the structure of its economy, and its inability to provide for its own defence still make it very dependent on relations with Russia. Six years

after the collapse of the USSR Kazakhstan's future as an independent state is still far from certain. The processes of separation between Russia and Kazakhstan and unification within Kazakhstan have not yet become irreversible.

The main obstacle to implementation of Russia's strategy is the ideology and policy of Nazarbayev's regime. It can be expected that some time in the future the removal of Nazarbayev from power will become a major Russian foreign policy priority. Whether this objective can or cannot be achieved will depend on Nazarbayev's ability to deliver on his promises to improve the economic situation and raise living standards. It is already clear that the policy of nation-state building, at least in the form it is being implemented, has failed to improve the average Kazakh's quality of life. Moreover, since the last years of the USSR the economic situation has noticeably worsened, and there are no indications that it will improve significantly in the foreseeable future.

Continuation of the current situation will indubitably result in further growth of internal opposition to Nazarbayev, and its consolidation across ethnic lines. It is unlikely that Nazarbayev's regime could survive against both strong internal opposition and outside pressure from Russia. If the regime falls, and more democratic forces come to power, it can be expected that the negative trends in Russian-Kazakh relations will be reversed. However, another scenario is possible, with the regime refusing to yield to popular pressure, intensifying internal repression and turning for support to the most radical nationalist elements in Kazakh society. In this case the outcome becomes unpredictable, not excluding armed inter-ethnic conflict and Russian involvement in it. Neither of these options promises anything good to Nazarbayev's regime; both compel it to race against time in pushing through major energy projects expected to bring in large revenues and by so doing stabilise the economic situation in Kazakhstan. Whether Nazarbayev can win this race remains to be seen.



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Zavtra



KAZAKHSTAN ON THE VERGE OF ACCESSION

TO THE RUSSIAN STATE

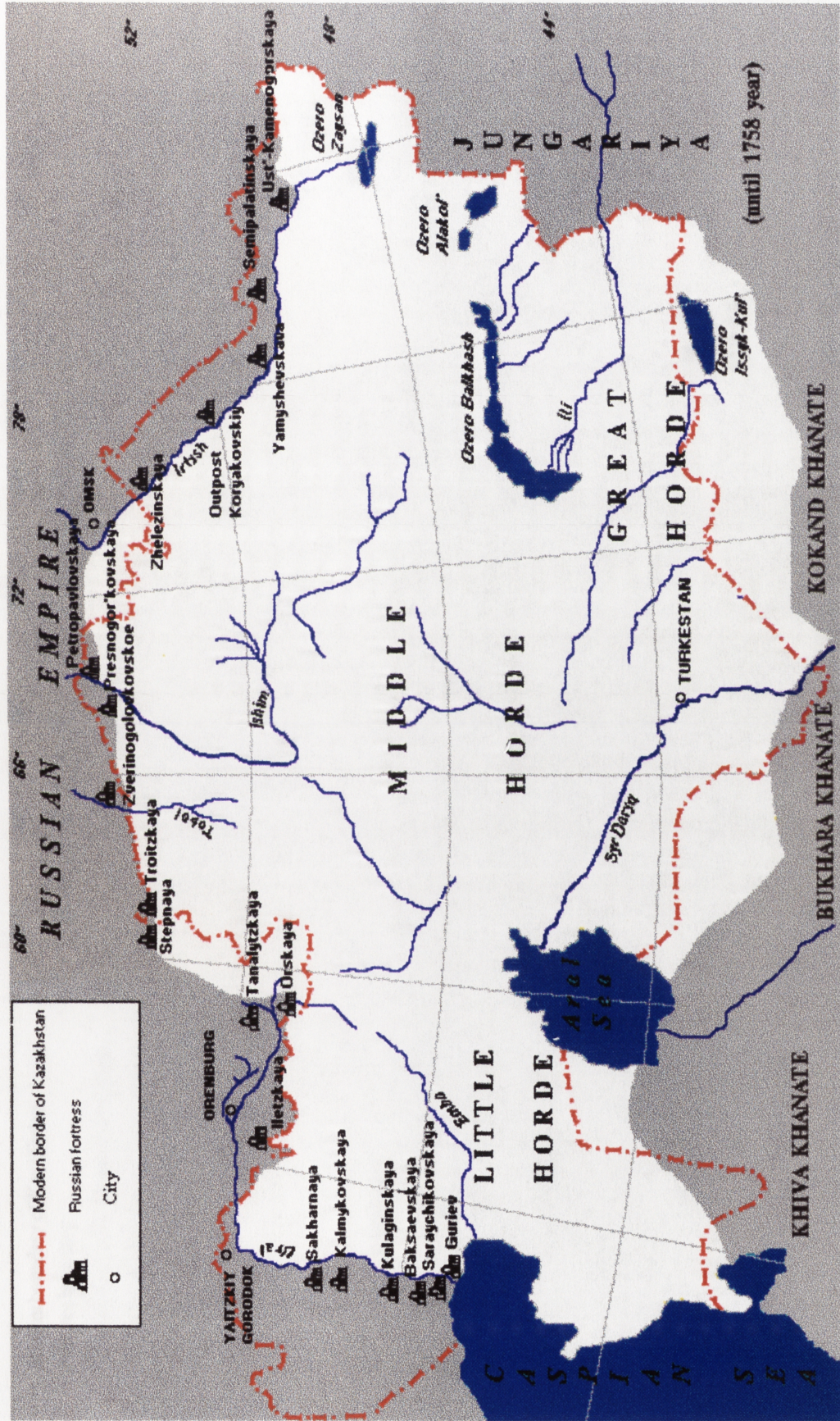








Table A.1  
Population of Kazakhstan by Nationality (1897-1989)

Nationality	1897		1911 <sup>1</sup>		1926		1939		1959		1979		1989	
Kazakhs	3,644,911	73.9%	4,168,918	60.8%	3,918,000	59.5%	2315532	38%	2,794,966	30%	5,289,349	36.0%	6,534,600	39.7%
Russians	633,311 <sup>1</sup>	12.8%	1,851,312	27%	1,188,000	18%	2449590	40.2%	3,974,229	42.7%	5,991,205	40.8%	6,227,500	37.8%
Ukrainians	-	-	-	-	818,000	12.4%	658099	10.8%	762,131	8.2%	897,964	6.1%	896,200	5.4%
Belorussians	-	-	-	-	-	-	30467	0.5%	107,463	2.1%	181,491	1.2%	182,600	1.1%
Tatars	55,252	1.1%	77,425	1.1%	48,000	0.7%	97496	1.6%	191,125	1.5%	313,460	2.1%	328,000	2.0%
Uzbeks	64,235	1.3%	76,784	1.1%	210,000	3.2%	103590	1.7%	136,570	1.1%	263,295	1.8%	332,000	2.0%
Germans	-	-	-	-	46,000	0.7%	914040	1.5%	659,751	7.1%	900,207	6.1%	957,500	5.8%
Karakalpaks	93,215	1.9%	111,425	1.6%	115,000	1.8%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	441,072	9.0%	602,540	8.4%	236,000	3.7%	347330	5.7	683,865	7.3%	847,312	5.9%	840,700	6.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4 931 966</b>		<b>6 852 431</b>		<b>6 579 000</b>		<b>6 093 507</b>		<b>9 309 847</b>		<b>14 684 283</b>		<b>16 484 400</b>	

Sources: Aziatskaya Rossiya, t.1, St Peterburg: Izdanie Pereselencheskogo upravleniya Glavnogo upravleniya zemleustroystva i zemledeliya, 1914, pp. 82-85; Kenjenbayev, S.M., Soveti v borbe za postroenie sotsializma (Istoriya sovetskogo stroitelstva v Kazakhstane 1917-1937), Alma-Ata: "Kazakhstan", 1969, pp. 250-251; Bakayev, L., Mezhnatsionnyye otnosheniya v Kazakhstane // Evraziyskoe Soobschestvo, No.2, 1995, p.7; Itogi vsesoyuznoy perepisi naseleniya 1959 goda, Kazakhskaya SSR, Moskva: Gosstatizdat, 1962, p. 162; Naselenie SSSR v 1987 godu, Statisticheskii sbornik, Moskva: "Finansi i statistika", 1988, p. 103; Brown, B., Kazakhs Now Largest National Group in Kazakhstan // Radio Liberty, Report on the USSR, Vol.2, No.18, May 4, 1990, pp. 18-19.

<sup>1</sup> For 1897 and 1911 this includes all Slavs.

Table A.2  
Agricultural Development of Kazakhstan (1906-1985)

Category	1906	1916	1920	1928	1940	1954	1965	1985
Sown land area (thousands of hectares)	1753.8	4466.3	3300.1	4200	6808.6	11 521.2	30 532.8	35 796.1
Grain output (thousands of tons) <sup>1</sup>	599.1	2014.1	678	2665	2516	3942	17 042.8	24 408.8
Tractors employed in agriculture	-	-	-	500 <sup>2</sup>	30 834	60 875	194 800	248 700
Harvesters employed in agriculture	-	-	-	-	11 759	33 260	98 800	118 700
Cattle (thousands of head)	3617	5062.1	4200	6534.3	3324.8	4638.6	6833.3	9027.6
Sheep and goats (thousands of head)	11 558	18 364.1	13 300	19 169	6992	20 550.9	30 120.9	36 056.6
Horses (thousands of head)	3538	4340	....	3544.8	815.7	1646.7	1070.3	1449.3
Meat production (thousands tons)	....	440 <sup>3</sup>	450	....	226	325	768.3	1131.3
Milk production (thousands of tons)	....	857 <sup>3</sup>	900	....	1099	1562	3327.8	4738.6
Wool production (thousands of tons)	....	42.7 <sup>3</sup>	....	....	13.7	38	80	97.7
Vegetable oil (thousands of tons)	-	....	0.3	0.4	4.7	39.3	58.2	74.1

Sources: Denko, G.J., The Russian Colonization of Kazakhstan 1896-1916, Bloomington: Indiana University, 1969, p.160; 171; 217-223. Aziatskaya Rossiya, t.1, pp. 272-273, 318. Istoriya Kazakhskoy SSR s drevneyshikh vremen do nashikh dnei, t.4, Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1977, pp. 248-249. Kiykbaev, N., Torzhestvo leninskoy natsionalnoy politiki v Kazakhstane, Alma-Ata: "Kazakhstan", 1968, p. 63. SSSR - strana sotsializma, Statisticheskiy sbornik, Moskva: CUNXU Gosplana SSSR i V/O Soyuzorguchet, 1936, p. 158. Narodnoe khozyaistvo Kazakhskoy SSR, Statisticheskiy sbornik, Alma-Ata: Kazakhgosizdat, 1957, pp. 56, 68-73, 141. Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR v 1961 g., Statisticheskiy ezhegodnik, Moskva: Gosstatizdat, 1962, pp. 346-347, 393-396. Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR v 1989 g. Statisticheskiy ezhegodnik, Moskva: Finansi i statistika, 1990, pp. 435-436, 463-469, 495. Narodnoe khozyaistvo Kazakhstana v 1976 g., Statisticheskiy ezhegodnik, Alma-Ata: "Kazakhstan", 1977, pp. 74, 93, 100. Narodnoe khozyaistvo Kazakhstana v 1977 g., Alma-Ata: "Kazakhstan", 1978, pp. 53-54, 58, 62, 81-85. Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR v 1979 g. Statisticheskiy ezhegodnik, Moskva: "Statistika", 1980, pp. 214, 276-278. Narodnoe khozyaistvo Kazakhstana v 1985 g., Statisticheskiy ezhegodnik, Alma-Ata: "Kazakhstan", 1986, pp. 54, 77, 81, 105-110. Davis, R.W., Industrialisation of Soviet Russia 1: The Socialist Offensive, 1929-1930, Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1980, p.428-429.

<sup>1</sup> For the following years average annual output for several years is given: 1928 (1928-1930); 1954(1950-1954); 1965(1965-1975); 1985 (1976-1985); 1989 (1986-1989).

<sup>2</sup> Estimate.

<sup>3</sup> Data for 1913.

**Table A.3**  
**Production of Some Industrial Commodities in Kazakhstan**  
**(1913-1985)**

Commodity	1913	1928	1940	1954	1965	1985
Electricity (millions of kwh)	1.3	7	632	4795.3	19 237	81 263
Coal (millions of tons)	0.09	0.037	7	23.7	45.8	131
Crude steel (thousands of tons)	-	-	-	221.7	1123.4	6155
Rolled ferrous metals (thousands of tons)	-	-	-	208	391	4200
Crude petroleum (thousands of tons)	118	251	697	1384	2000	22 800
Cement (thousands of tons)	-	-	-	330.6	4036.9	7549
Construction bricks (millions)	-	6.3	220.2	587.4	1548	1940.4
Fertilisers (thousands of tons)	-	-	-	322.5	776.5	7440.3
Sulphuric acid (thousands of tons)	-	-	49	58 <sup>1</sup>	863.6	1670.8
Metal processing machines	-	-	-	501 <sup>2</sup>	1915	4143
Metallurgic equipment	-	-	-	2857 <sup>1</sup>	9005	11 210
Leather shoes (thousands of pairs)	....	470 <sup>3</sup>	1189	5980	14 995	32 260
Cotton fibre (thousands of tons)	1.9	5.8	35	72.1	70.4	91.9
Fabric of all types (thousands of meters)	139 <sup>4</sup>	129 <sup>4</sup>	472 <sup>5</sup>	17 498 <sup>5</sup>	31 300	227 800

Sources: SSSR - strana sotsializma, Statisticheskii sbornik, Moskva: CUNXU Gosplana SSSR i V/O Soyuzorguchet, 1936, p. 157. Narodnoe khozyaistvo Kazakhskoy SSR, Statisticheskii sbornik, Alma-Ata: Kazakhgosizdat, 1957, pp. 35-44. Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR v 1958 g., Statisticheskii ezhegodnik, Moskva: Gosstatizdat, 1959, p. 234. Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR v 1961 g., Statisticheskii ezhegodnik, Moskva: Gosstatizdat, 1962, p. 197, 240. Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR v 1965 g., Statisticheskii ezhegodnik, Moskva: Gosstatizdat, 1966, pp. 182, 215. Narodnoe khozyaistvo Kazakhstana v 1976 g., Statisticheskii ezhegodnik, Alma-Ata: "Kazakhstan", 1977, p. 33. Narodnoe khozyaistvo Kazakhstana v 1977 g., Statisticheskii ezhegodnik, Alma-Ata: "Kazakhstan", 1978, pp 36-42. Narodnoe khozyaistvo Kazakhstana v 1980 g., Statisticheskii ezhegodnik, Alma-Ata: "Kazakhstan", 1981, p. 40. Narodnoe khozyaistvo Kazakhstana v 1982 g., Statisticheskii ezhegodnik, Alma-Ata: "Kazakhstan", 1983, pp. 41, 45. Narodnoe khozyaistvo Kazakhstana v 1985 g., Statisticheskii ezhegodnik, Alma-Ata: "Kazakhstan", 1986, pp. 42-52.

<sup>1</sup> Data for 1950.

<sup>2</sup> Data for 1955.

<sup>3</sup> Data for 1932.

<sup>4</sup> Wool fabric only.

<sup>5</sup> Wool and cotton fabric.

**Table A.4**  
**Education in Kazakhstan (1914-1985)**

Category	1914	1928	1940	1954	1965	1985
Literacy of population in Kazakhstan (in %)	15.7 <sup>1</sup>	25.2	83.6	96.9	100	100
Number of schools of all types	2006	3927	7790	9043	10 728	8728
Number of pupils in schools	105 059	273 584	1 138 187	1 290 634	2 852 000	3 348 000
Number of teachers in schools	3319	7883	44 381	70 128	124 044	237 000
Specialised secondary educational institutions	7	24	118	130	169	246
Students in specialised secondary education	302	3620	30 276	61 729	171 000	277 600
Number of tertiary educational institutions	-	1	20	26	39	55
Number of students in tertiary educational institutions	-	75	10 419	45 430	144 700	273 300

**Table A.5**  
**Medical Care in Kazakhstan (1914-1985)**

Category	1914	1928	1940	1954	1965	1985
Number of doctors of all specialisations	244	807	2747	9153	22 494	59 400
Number of trained nurses	393	1308	11 953	27 952	76 443	180 500
Medical institutions of all types (hospitals, clinics, surgeries, obstetric stations etc)	257	724	3499	5347	4934	6239

**Sources:** Narodnoe khozyaistvo Kazakhskoy SSR, Statisticheskiy sbornik, Alma-Ata: Kazakhgosizdat, 1957, pp. 284-285, 322-327, 338-339. Itogi vsesoiuznoy perepisi naseleniia 1959 goda, Kazakhskaya SSR, Moskva, Gosstatizdat, 1962, p. 59. Narodnoe khozyaistvo Kazakhstana v 1977 g., Statisticheskiy ezhegodnik, Alma-Ata, "Kazakhstan", 1978, p 188, 191, 195, 220. Narodnoe khozyastvo Kazakhstana v 1985 g., Statisticheskiy ezhegodnik, Alma-Ata: "Kazakhstan", 1986, pp. 280; 253; 260.

<sup>1</sup> Estimate.

Table A.6  
Agricultural Development of Kazakhstan (1985-1995)

Category	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Sown land area (thousands of hectares)	35796	35618	35591	35658	35229	35182	34936	34840	34060	31672	28659
Grain output (thousands of tons)	22694	26562	25721	20970	8797	28488	11992	29772	21631	16454	9505
Cattle (millions of head)	9.2	9.5	9.7	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.6	9.6	9.3	8.1	6.9
Sheep and goats (millions of head)	35.5	36.4	36.4	36.5	36.2	35.7	34.6	34.4	34.2	25.1	19.6
Pigs (millions of head)	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.0	2.6	2.4	2.0	1.7
Meat in slaughter weight (thousands tons)	1133	1300	1399	1493	1573	1560	1524	1258	1312	1207	985
Milk production (thousands of tons)	4763	5040	5185	5321	5563	5642	5555	5265	5576	5296	4619
Wool production (thousands of tons)	97.6	106.0	106.4	108.4	109.9	107.9	104.4	96.5	94.6	75.3	58.3
Vegetable oil (thousands of tons)	74.1	75.5	80.0	85.4	92.2	95.0	101.0	59.5	49.0	44.5	43.2

Sources: Strani-chleni SNG, Statisticheskiy ezhegodnik 1992, Moskva, 1992, pp. 214-224; Ekonomika SNG v 1994 godu, Kratkiy spravochnik, Moskva, 1992, pp. 87-104, 210-211; Statisticheskiy bulletin Statkoma SNG, No.8 (96), February 1995, pp. 37-89; Statistika: Baza dannykh Statkoma SNG, Moskva, Sodruzhestvo Nezavisimikh Gosudarstv v 1995 godu, Statisticheskiy ezhegodnik, Moskva, 1996, pp.55, 255-258.

Table A.7  
Production of Some Industrial Commodities in Kazakhstan (1985-1995)

Commodity	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Electricity (billions of kwh)	81.3	85.1	88.5	88.4	89.7	87.4	86.0	82.7	77.4	66.4	66.7
Coal (millions of tons)	131	138	142	143	138	131	130	127	112	105	83.3
Crude steel (millions of tons)	6.2	6.5	6.6	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.4	6.1	4.6	3.0	66.4
Rolled ferrous metals (millions of tons)	4.4	4.6	4.7	4.9	5.1	4.9	4.7	4.3	3.4	2.3	2.1
Crude petroleum (millions of tons)	22.8	23.7	24.5	25.5	25.4	25.8	26.6	25.8	23.0	20.3	20.5
Cement (millions of tons)	7.5	8.1	8.3	8.4	8.6	8.3	7.6	6.4	4.0	2.0	1.8
Construction bricks (billions)	1.9	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.1	2.0	1.3	0.8	0.4
Fertilisers (thousands of tons)	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.5	0.9	0.3	0.1	0.2
Sulphuric acid (thousands of tons)	1.7	1.9	2.0	2.1	1.9	3.2	2.8	2.3	1.2	0.7	0.7
Metal cutting machines (thousands)	2.8	2.6	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.6	2.4	1.6	1.2	0.4	0.06
Metallurgic equipment (thousands)	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.3
Footwear (millions of pairs)	32.3	32.5	32.7	34.1	35.2	36.5	34.1	20.2	13.5	7.8	2.1
Raw cotton (thousands of tons)	305	333	312	325	315	324	290	246	198	206	180
Fabric of all types (millions sq meters)	289	300	288	324	330	325	249	228	188	107	31.1

Sources: Strani-chleni SNG, Statisticheskii ezhegodnik 1992, Moskva, 1992, pp. 214-224; Ekonomika SNG v 1994 godu, Kratkiy spravochnik, Moskva, 1992, pp. 87-104, 210-211; Statisticheskii bulletin Statkoma SNG, No.8 (96), February 1995, pp. 37-89; Statistika: Baza dannykh Statkoma SNG, Moscow; Sodruzhestvo Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv v 1996 godu, Statisticheskii ezhegodnik, Moskva, 1996, p. 49; Statisticheskii bulletin Statkoma SNG, No.2 (138), January 1996, pp.100-105; Statisticheskii bulletin Statkoma SNG, No.8 (144), April 1996, p.115.